

BYTOWN

Bytes

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL ATARI USERS' GROUP

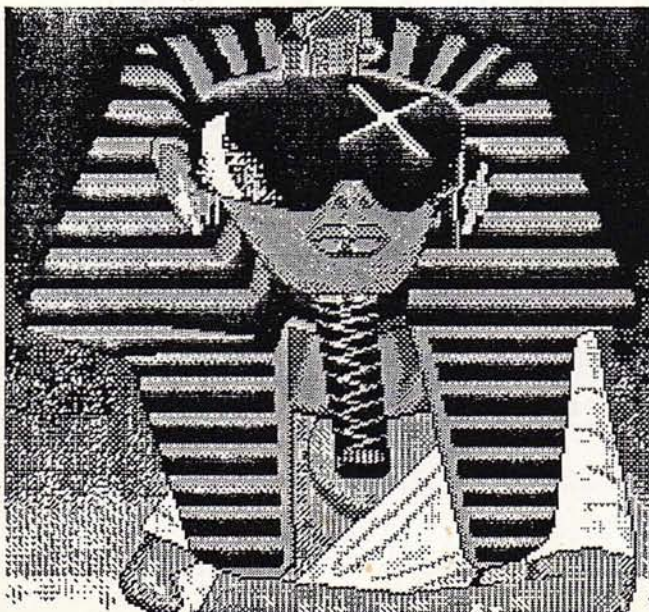
June 1987

NEWS:

Lots of STuff
including
reports from
the Buffalo
Atari Show

PREVIEW:

Aliants



REVIEWS OF:

Power Plan,
Roadwar 2000,
Golden Path,
Hard Ball,
Colonial Conquest,
ST Digi-Drum,
Word Writer

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BYTOWN BYTES

JUNE 1987

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SECRETARY Terry Webb
ADVERTISING Wayne Longman

ST GROUP EXECUTIVE

[all Atari 16-bit computers]

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TREASURER Peter Blais

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[all Atari 8-bit computers]

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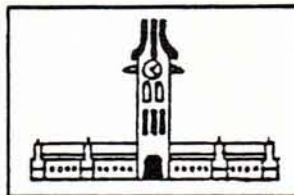
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N.C.A.U.G. 1987 MEETING SCHEDULE

ST Meetings will be held the last Tuesday of every month; XE Meetings the last Saturday of every month.

ST MEETINGS

Tuesday 7 PM
Jun. 30

XE MEETINGS

Sat. 9:30 AM
Jun. 27

----- Tuesday, July 28 - Combined Meeting -----
----- Tuesday, August 25 - Combined Meeting -----
Sept. 29 Sept. 26

Meetings are held in the auditorium of the NRC Building, 100 Sussex Drive.

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Submissions of articles or advertising copy, subscription requests or back issue orders should be sent to the N.C.A.U.G. at the address above. Local members wishing to submit articles may leave them at G Plus, 130 Albert Street. The deadline for articles and ads is the 12th day of the preceding month.

RAMTOP REMARKS

This month marks an unfortunate trend continued from the last issue. Namely the lack of news, views and reviews for XE members. Of course as the past XE President this is nothing new, but the situation has proceeded to get worse.

Since the new year only the XE Librarian, Ed Wilton, one member, John Hjalmarson, and myself have written XE articles. With the last issue there was only 1 review, and for a while it looked as if this issue would have no input from the XE side until Ed Wilton stepped in to fill the void.

While the XE side is out numbered by the ST side there is still a lot happening in the world of XE computers (even with Atari Corp. doing next to nothing for the 8-bit line). I urge our XE members to start submitting articles of any nature, surely the veteran XE users have something to impart (after using the 8-bit computers for so long) to the rest of the members. This is still an Atari users group for all Atari computers whether they are XEs, STs or PCs, so remember if you don't support your side of the club you can't complain.

Keith Burnage
NCAUG Director

The Editor Writes

This issue continues the style set by last month's newsletter; large and late. For an explanation of the late part see the letter to the editor on page 4.

This month we start a new feature that will appear periodically. Called 'The Mail Bag', this article talks about the mail and promotional offers that are received at the NCAUG mailbox. Glenn Brown is back this month with a monster-sized STuff column to bring us up to date on the world of Atari. This issue is also filled with reviews of the latest software releases.

Last issue I included a Survey card to try to get opinions about the newsletter content from the members. The response has been underwhelming. Please take the time to submit the surveys. I will continue with the survey cards until I can get a clear idea of what the readers want. Feel free to comment on other aspects of the NCAUG on these surveys. The reason for this big push on member opinions is my desire to get the newsletter to reflect what the members want. Please help by submitting the surveys.

In this same vein, we had a newsletter meeting to try to figure newsletter direction. Surprisingly, there was a consensus that our newsletter should contain more information on the NCAUG and the local scene. Ideas such as including articles on meeting activities, SIG reports, local retail information, and disk of the month information were discussed. I say discussed, since we will only proceed with these ideas if members step forward to work in these areas. Is anybody listening?

Over the summer I will be getting the new volunteers on line. For potential authors and users of Publishing Partner, Jim Turner and myself will be running some group tutorial sessions on how to use Publishing Partner.

One item discussed at the meeting was a change of name for the newsletter. 'Bytown' carries no meaning outside of the immediate Ottawa area, and I'm sure that many people in Ottawa don't even get the reference. Those who do understand the term 'Bytown' may interpret our title to be the equivalent of 'Ottawa Sucks'! It was also mentioned that our cutesy name doesn't suit such a prestigious international publication as this. Anyhow, the decision was made to have a great 'Name the Newsletter Contest'.

Keep those articles coming!
Until next time ... happy computing!

Bob Thompson

THE GREAT 'NAME THE NEWSLETTER' CONTEST

Submit your idea(s) for a new name for this newsletter to the Editor in writing, verbally, by phone, mail, drop off at G Plus (Albert St.), or any other way that you can think of. The deadline for ideas is the combined August meeting. After that the name will be chosen by committee (no more democracy here!). The new masthead will appear on the August-September newsletter, available at the September meeting. The contributor of the winning name will receive a substantial prize, along with the glory and adulation of his peers.

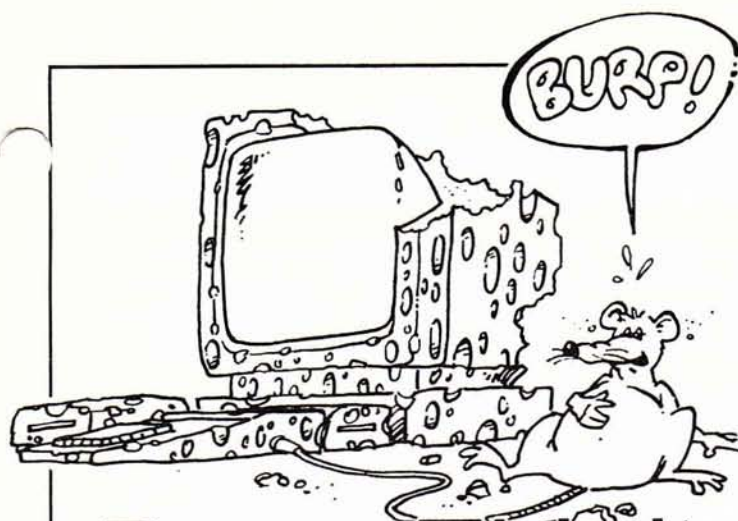


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Byte This!

I'm getting so good at this computer that sometimes I can't believe it's me that's doing it. If I can only convince Froot Loops that I'm getting good, maybe she won't keep tying me up at night. She read in her Dr. Spock Book of Poems that a computer screen gives off enough radiation to take the dye out of her hair so she won't come close enough to read what I've done on the screen. I save things to disk but she can't read a disk either and I can't hold the little metal shutter back to play them on the phonograph for her.

I need a printer. A printer makes hard copy. You would think that hard copy would need cardboard that is so stiff that it won't bend but for some reason, hard copy on a computer is on soft paper. I think I've figured out that the reason it's called hard is that it's so hard to get a copy that it's damn near impossible. There's another type of hard copy in computers. When they do something strange to a disk so that the program on it can't be pirated, everybody says "that software's hard copy!".

The nice thing about printers is that almost any printer will fit any computer. They all fit. But a lot of them won't work. If you buy a printer on sale, an Atari ST ignores it. The printer has to be "Epson Compatible". Epson is a company which builds very expensive printers. Any other printer can be compatible with Epson if the price is the same.

Seeing as I could buy any kind of printer I wanted, I decided to make a family excursion of it and take Froot Loops and the Rat Kids right into the centre of town so we could all shop together. After all, it didn't have to be an Atari dealer so we could visit a real computer store. After we'd decided who would wear the socks and packed a lunch, we set off to find a printer. The first real computer store we went into asked us what time our appointment was. This was just like my Atari store. I explained that I didn't want my oil changed but was here to buy a printer. "A

salesPERSON would be with us presently."

We waited around, but I didn't know whether it was for 3 quarts of 10W-30 or a 12 colour Fujitsu (they make supercomputers so they must make super-printers). Finally, this PERSON showed up, took an impression of my Visa card and asked what we wanted. When I told the PERSON that we were looking for a printer, it wanted to know what type of computer I had. Atari. The PERSON walked away.

At the next store I found out that people who sell computers think that people who buy computers are stupid. Before I could buy a printer I had to pass a test. "What did I want a printer for?" To print. "But what did I want to print?" Words. "Ah! You want a Near Letter Quality!" Now just a minute. I know that words are made up of letters and if you want to understand the words then you have to read the letters. If I wanted to nearly print words or nearly understand the letters then I would use a printer that could print things that were nearly the quality of letters. I can't imagine what a character that was nearly a "q" would look like. Froot Loops has an uncle who is a character and nearly a pervert and he looks like the Prime Minister but when we got married I promised to keep politics out of sex, so I'm not allowed to talk about him.

Printers are rated in cps which are something like rpm's but can't be measured on a tachometer (I never understood why they didn't call it a rpmometer). Each printer has two cps. A "draft" which is very fast but makes up for it because you can't read anything, and the "nlq" which it makes by printing each line about four times. The really good printers put all four lines on top of each other so that the letters look the same as the draft but are a lot darker and smeared.

I found out that I could also print graphics. That's why you can't use the \$127 printer from Atari. It will only work with a non-graphics computer. But it won't fit an IBM. By this time, the Rat Kids had found out how to make every printer in the store spit out pages of scrunched up little letters and a bunch of odd symbols which were probably nearly the quality of some letters if you were so inclined to read that way. Froot Loops got disgusted and went down the street to buy some Tupperware and the salesman got the guy from the stockroom to show the Rat Kids the garbage dumpster in the back alley.

It was just me and him. Eyeball to eyeball. Hard negotiations. I bought a dot matrix printer, a daisy wheel printer and a seven colour plotter. Oh yes, I also got a plastic cover which disguises them all as a fireplace with a red light bulb that flickers and looks like a fire. Froot Loops will never know the joy that is hidden there.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

First, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on an excellent job. Bob, you have taken the time and effort to produce a newsletter which is clearly superior in presentation style to any other ATARI Newsletter that I have seen, including the one from our namesakes, south of the border.

However, as we are all aware, your efforts have not been without some penalty to the timeliness of the newsletter or without sacrifice to the equality of the club.

First, I would like to address the timeliness issue. For two months in a row the newsletter has not been available for the XE meeting. Yes, I know the second month it was there for the ST meeting, and yes I know the XE group could have come to the ST meeting and picked up our copy. The point is, some XE people do put in effort to get their articles and other contributions in on time and late delivery discourages them from trying so hard next time.

Second, I have to take issue with the restrictions being placed on the XE side of the club. The most surprising aspect of these restrictions is that they are coming from you, Bob Thompson, the club member who faithfully held onto his ATARI 400 long after the rest of us were using them for doorstops. Here's the scenario. If an ST member wishes to submit an article to the newsletter he types it up, stores the information electronically on his 3 1/2" floppy and gives the disk to Bob. If an XE member wishes to submit an article, he types it up, stores it electronically on his 5 1/4" floppy and here is where things begin to differ. He can't give this diskette to Bob. He has to go looking for a friend with a Modem and 8-bit Atari computer so that he can transmit it to the ST BBS. Yes the ST BBS. From the BBS the article gets to Bob somehow. Have you ever tried to access the ST BBS. I have. On at least six different occasions on the weekend of May 9th I tried in vain. On one of these tries I left my Auto Dial modem running for over an hour. All to no avail.

I recognize our editors desire to be able to produce a complete newspaper using the laser printer. However, the impediment this puts in the way of contributions from the XE side of the club is unacceptable. It is my opinion, that unless a process can be introduced for the XE group similar to that for the ST group, then we should dispense with the laser printer, at least for the XE articles. Is it so terrible to create one or two pages by the old means and include them in the overall

newsletter? If the XE group continues to be hampered in their attempts to input to the newsletter our newsletter will quickly follow the national magazines in their lack of good coverage on the XE product.

In summary Bob, you have done an excellent job of advancing our newsletter to be the best. I would just like to emphasize, that the timeliness and content of the newsletter should be far more important than the use of a laser printer or other technical marvels. I know you will take these comments in the constructive way they are meant. If you want to discuss it further please give me a call.

Ed Wilton

The Editor Replies

Ed brings up some valid points in his letter that deserve a response, for the benefit of all members.

On the first point of the timeliness of the newsletter, I can only agree fully with him. The switch from conventional layout and pasteup of dot matrix printouts to an electronically produced newsletter using Publishing Partner did cause more than its fair share of problems. Technical problems, coupled with the difficulties of first time use of Publishing Partner by contributors led to the last two issues being late. These technical difficulties are behind us now.

This issue is also late, but for a totally different reason. By the deadline I had received no articles. The letter to the editor, and the other articles by Ed Wilton were the first articles received. Although I knew of a lot of articles being submitted, the fact that everything was late prevented us from assembling the newsletter on time. In order to keep the material fresh, I see no reason to move the deadline, as long as the material is in by the 12th of the month, at the latest. We are also going to be using more staff in the fall to produce the newsletter.

In response to Ed's second point regarding the difficulties of XE members contributing to the newsletter, I have found a good solution to the problem. Guy Gervais, the XE Ssyop, has both XE and ST machines. He is willing and able to convert files. The easiest method is to upload XE files to the XE BBS, but Guy can also take 5 1/4" disks and transfer them directly to 3 1/2" and get the articles to me. Also, I will still accept articles on paper.

I appreciate all comments.

Bob Thompson, Editor

THE MAIL BAG

Welcome to the premier column of The Mail Bag! As you may or may not know the club receives a lot of press releases, and to date no one has combed through these releases to inform members of news, and what new products will be available for the XE or ST computers. So The Mail Bag has been created to fill the gap by briefly covering each new product. I will make the effort to have the various releases at the meetings so you can read everything they have to say.

This month we start off with a ST software veteran, Michtron, who have been very busy. First off is an announcement concerning M-Disk and Soft Spool. Both programs have not only been updated, but have been combined on one disk. If you own one of the programs just send your original disk along with \$10 U.S. (\$5 U.S. if you own both), and you will receive both programs under the title of M-Disk Plus. Besides updating, and combining the two programs, both have been reduced in size to allow more room for M-Disk, Soft Spool, and other application programs. M-Disk Plus sells for \$39.95 U.S.

Besides updating old programs Michtron has four new programs available for the ST. Two of which come from their sister company in Germany, GFA Systemtechnik. GFA Draft at, \$99.95 U.S., is a 2D CAD drawing program that can be used for a wide variety of tasks from designing circuits to drawing up house plans. GFA Draft is dependant on GEM, and thus all functions are carried out via pull down menus, and most functions are carried out by simply pressing a mouse button. This program also manipulates drawings by changing the window size, but such changes are not permanent as you can return to the original. The actual drawings can have a maximum of 255 layers, with 10 being shown at the screen at once. Of course GFA Draft supports text which can be displayed in various sizes, and directions. Plus a zoom feature lets you do detail work, and the pictures can be saved in different sizes. An added feature allows you to create symbols out of often used drawings which can be accessed by the function keys.

The other product from their sister company is GFA Basic Compiler, \$79.95 U.S., which converts programs written with GFA Basic into assembly language. This compiler is a two pass converter that creates self contained files that do not require the presence of a runtime module. A positive feature is that those of you who want to sell programs compiled with this program do not have to give Michtron royalties.

For those harping on the lack of educational software for the ST, Michtron has released Perfect Match, \$39.95 U.S. This program is a game that contains 12 questions and answers that are dealt out on the screen. The object is to match the question or answer with its correct counterpart. The program comes with 11 sets of questions covering topics on animals, science, the Bible with additional question sets planned for the future or you can create your own sets.

The last release from Michtron is yet another entry into the MIDI market. Super Conductor, \$79.95 U.S., is a 16 track MIDI sequencer that features transposing, editing, mixing, etc. Super Conductor can store a maximum of ten songs into memory which can then be played singly or continuously. A feature called Systems Exclusive Mode allows for the transfer of data from the synthesizer to the computer where you can edit or compose songs using a word processor without having to touch the keyboard. This program will transform the internal speaker on the ST into three monophonic synthesizers.

Not all of the action as we know is taking place on this side of the pond. Software Punch from England has made it possible to network STs with two products. Punchnet is an intelligent Network manager that runs in the background. The initial cost is 160 pounds, with the only additional cost for a single line driver for every 8 users. With each user having 8 outlets, modem, printer hard disk, and all outlets can gain access to other users drives. The network works via RS-232 port running at 19,200 baud. Punchnet allows for one user to cut a section out of a document, send it to another user for modification, continue working on their system, and then paste the section when it has been returned. Software Punch's other network program is Punchnet Plus identical to the previously mentioned program except that it has a 1 Megabyte per second transfer rate, and can support 32,000 users, with a similar number of printers and hard disks, in a local network. With a price of 400 pounds.

In a similar vein is MT C-Shell from Beckemeyer Development Tools. This program is a multitasking, multiuser operating system that runs TOS programs, in a fully compatible file system. The program features E-mail that will inform you if there is any mail for you. Plus you can find out who else is logged in. The announcement states that if there is not a command for a task you wish to perform you can combine several MT C-Shell commands or you can write a shell command procedure which can be executed like a command.

Also from Beckemeyer Development Tools comes software that will suit those wanting to use an ST in a store environment. Advanced Business Systems handles everything from using the ST as a cash register and point-of-sales system that will adjust the inventory, and can tell you which items are selling like hotcakes. It can also create a graph of recent product movement, determine re-order quantities, and create purchase orders. Once you have received stock it can match purchases with orders, record discrepancies, and update vendor files. Advanced Business System can be used with or without a cash drawer or printer, will process the payroll, provide estimates on work order bids, and is a multiuser/multitasking program that features file protection, and allows for multiple terminals to make sales at the same time.

For those who want to lug their STs out of the office or home, but do not want to take a monitor along as JNL Technologies has the \$79.95 solution for STs without an RF. The Monitor Box creates a high-quality composite video signal to channel 3 or 4. Besides working with all STs you can record your ST screens on a VCR, and create transparencies with an optional Polaroid Palette.

XE owners get Ultra-Speed Operating System to dabble with courtesy of Inteletek Enterprises, a company created by the Western New York Atari Users Group. This product is for the XL and XE line of computers, and offers improvements in several areas. In data transfer Ultra-Speed O.S. in conjunction with several 1050 drive modifiers will improve the speed at which data transfer is done, and will do the same for the keyboard by doubling the repeat rate of the keyboard. Plus a cold start switch has been built in by Ultra-Speed O.S. using the HELP-RESET function keys to perform a cold start rather than the current practice of throwing the power switch.

Our last pile of releases all come from Migraph who gained ST owners attention with Easy-Draw. This time around they have 5 announcements concerning Easy-Draw. Font Pack 1, Personal Draw Art 1, and Technical Draw Art 1 are all designed to work with version 2.0.

Font Pack 1 adds two new fonts, Rocky and HiTech, while Personal Draw Art 1 contains 100+ object-oriented images of borders, symbols, etc. Technical Draw Art 1, as the name implies, is geared to those who use Easy-Draw for doing technical illustrations. This disk contains a number of symbol libraries for electrical schematics, hydraulic and piping layouts, flow charts, and wiring diagrams to mention a few. All of the mentioned disks will sell for \$29.95 U.S.

The other Easy-Draw announcements show that Migraph is looking to jump on the Desktop Publishing band wagon by releasing additional printer drivers, \$19.95 U.S. The new drivers will make Easy-Draw work with the HP Laserjet Plus and II, and 24 pin printers, with a postscript driver ready for a June release. As a note of interest a print out of Easy-Draw done on the Atari Laser printer was included with the announcements, and looks very impressive.

The last Easy-Draw announcement is for a bit-image loader called Easy-Draw Supercharger which as the press release said, "is the latest in a series of products marking Easy-Draw's entry into the Desktop Publishing market."

This product will make it possible to load bit-images from either Degas or Neochrome, and is supposed to be revolutionary in the area of resolution. While most bit-image loaders give a resolution of 72 dots per inch (dpi), the Supercharger is able to display scanned images for either color or mono systems, and when used in conjunction with a laser or equivalent device give a hard copy at the same resolution as the actual image. Supercharger will be released in June at a price around \$50 U.S, but will have to be ordered directly from Migraph.

The last piece of news makes the review of Migraph's Label Master old news. Now comes Label Master Elite, \$44.95 U.S, which sees improvements done to the graphic editor with the addition of several drawing commands, circle, line, box, mirror, and a clip board that will let you cut and paste between designs.

The mail list manager has been modified to delete, search, modify or sort records in either business or personal formats. Plus a 48 character comment field has been included.

There has also been improvement to how Label Master gives you a hard copy. This sees the addition of printer drivers to support most printers on the market. Upgrades may be obtained by sending your original Label Master disk and \$5 to Migraph.

I almost forgot one last bit of news. Seems Atari Canada is looking for testimonials from ST users. So if you have an interesting job, solution or story on how or why you use an ST, now is your chance to get your name in print. Just contact Martin Herzog at (416) 479-1266

See you next month! Keith Burnage

Chiang Video Inc.

June '87

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New Products Dept.

On the upper right are the new software arrivals, so look at that first. That's what everybody's interested in anyway. **A-Calc Prime** is a new spreadsheet system from Antic (actually Kuma in England) that looks like it could become the standard for those of us who can't afford VIP.

Together with its companion program **A-Graph** (available separately), it should make a formidable numerical applications package. **Certificate Maker** is a PrintShop-style program that allows you to make (what else?) certificates of merit or good conduct or whatever. **Alice Pascal** is an *extremely* easy to use Pascal system. The available help facilities are nothing short of phenomenal. It also features a structure-oriented editor, so when you type **WHILE**, or any other Pascal keyword, the appropriate structure shows up on the screen, and you proceed in a "fill in the blanks" style.

Several great new software packages for the XE are out. **Trailblazer** and **Bop'N'Wrestle** are both from Mindscape. **Trailblazer** is a 3-d race along a track pitted with holes, warp bumps, jumpers, and other obstacles. Two people can play on a split screen a la Ballblazer. Hmm, wonder about this name similarity? **Bop'N'Wrestle** is, you guessed it, a wrestling game. Flying airplane spins forever!!! **The Pawn** is the translation for the XE of the famous ST game. Be warned though, you need a 1050 drive, as it uses medium density disks. **Flight Simulator Scenario Disks** are now available for the XE, so you can terrorize the locals in new areas. **Wizards's Crown** and **Phantasie** are new swords and sorcery simulations from SSI.

New ST Software

Certificate Maker
Certificate Library
Alice Pascal
PaintPro
The Golden Path
Roadwar 2000
High Roller
Championship Baseball
Shuttle II
A-Calc Prime



New XE Software

Trailblazer
Bop'N'Wrestle
Mail Order Monsters
The Pawn
Flight Sim Scenario disks
221B Baker Street
Wizard's Crown
Phantasie

5.25" Disks - \$24.95 box 10 SS/DD 3.5"

So don't remember the Alamo. See if we care.
What a fun bunch of guys : **Ken, Ross, Jim, and Gary**

SNEAK PEEKS

This month certainly has been a busy one with a large number of titles appearing for both the XE, and ST systems. And speaking of "new" you will notice that the star system for grading software has gone. This is due to Publishing Partner interpreting the star symbol as an 8, and printing it as such. So I have gone to a number system of 1 to 10.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

SUB BATTLE SIMULATOR (EPYX)

Yet another submarine simulation that offers the most flexibility to date. You can try your hand at commanding either an American sub or a German Kriegsmarine U-Boat, in either North Atlantic or South Pacific action. You can either perform one of the sixty missions or try to survive through the entire war. Sub Battle looks to be a combination of Silent Service, and Gato combining good graphics with a strong attention to detail. (ST) Release-September \$T.B.A

MATCH POINT (MICHTRON)

Rather than make a fool of yourself on the courts you will soon be able to do it in the comfort of your own home. Match Point features a strong attention to graphics, and realism that includes ball boys on the sidelines to retrieve balls. The game comes with three levels of difficulty, novice, amateur, and professional, and can be played with the control of your choice, keyboard, mouse or joystick. (ST) Release and price T.B.A

NEW IN TOWN

COLONIAL CONQUEST (SSI)

(8) Another world domination game that first was a hit for the XE. Unlike Balance of Power this game is an introductory level game, and can be enjoyed by all ages. This game takes place during the Age of Imperialism (late 1800's to 1918), and allows for six players to vie for the title of greatest nation using subversion, espionage, economic aid, and military might. A definite winner for the XE, the same is true for the ST. See review for details. (ST) \$49.95 Can.

ROADWAR 2000 (SSI)

(8) A solitaire role-playing game for the ST that will appeal to fans of the Mad Max movies. Roadwar by Jeff Johnson, is similar in structure to his other game, Six-Gun Shootout. This game takes place in a North

America devastated by bacteriological warfare, with the cities run by armed gangs. Unlike the lowlifes you are a patriotic gang leader who has taken on the task of locating the 8 government scientists, and returning them to the secret laboratory where they will be able to develop a cure for the virus. While seeking to complete the mission you will have to keep your gang together while battling your way across the highways of Canada, America, and Mexico. Roadwar 2000 has detailed graphics and allows you to fight out the battles turn by turn or you can let the computer quickly decide the outcome. See review for details. (ST) \$49.95 Can.

BUREAUCRACY (INFOCOM)

Douglas Adam, of Hitchhiker Guide fame, offers all of the civil servants in town the chance to put up with more red tape woes over the weekends. Bureaucracy presents the task of sorting your way through a through a bureaucratic mess of major proportions. Having landed a new job in a new town your boss sends you to Paris for a combined business, and vacation trip. Things start going wrong from the day you move in, and with the bank refusing refusing to acknowledge your change of address form. (ST) \$49.95 Can.

BOP'N WRESTLE (MINDSCAPE)

Get Hulkasized as you perform 16 moves, from an Atomic Drop to a Flying Body Press, in this arcade style 1 or 2 player game as you guide tenth ranked Gorgeous Greg in search of the championship title. (XE) \$39.95 Can.

THE GAMBLER (KEYPUNCH SOFTWARE)

Is four games in one package that lets you visit Atlantic city without the inherent cost. Try your hand at Blackjack, Draw Poker, Chuck-A-Luck or the infamous Slot machines. (ST) \$19.95 Can.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL (GAMESTAR)

(5.5) A strategy/action game that is similar in look and style to the original 8-bit game, but is better in every way. A split screen shows the infield, and a view from behind the plate to see where pitches are going. You can draft a team, and play in a 24 league against a human or computer opponent as you seek to make it to the Championship series. While the players are not based on real ones, the game does rate each player on all aspects of the game. Championship Baseball has good graphics that include base coaches, and shirtless fans sunning themselves in the stands. (ST) \$49.95 Can.

HARDBALL (ACCOLADE)

(7) Another XE conversion for the ST that also incorporates a split screen. Like Championship Baseball this is a strategy/action game that features the ability to set line ups. Unlike Championship Baseball this game has a full pitching staff to work with so you can go through the whole bull pen if you have too. Plus the ability to direct the type of pitches your hitters will go for. See review for details (ST) \$54.95 Can.

WIZARD'S CROWN (SSI)

XE owners finally get a chance to try their hand at this game that was released a while ago. While ST owners will have to wait a while to add this game to their collection. Another fantasy role-playing game that pits your party against the tyrant Tarmon who has stolen the Wizard's Crown, and hidden it in the spell woven walls of Arghan. There are 8 ready made characters included or you can create your own as you search for clues. The game has a unique feature that lets you resolve battles blow by blow or let the computer quickly decide the outcome. (XE/ST) ST Release -May. \$49.95 Can.

GOLDRUNNER (MICHTRON)

An arcade style game that features some of the fastest moving graphics to date. Basically a shoot-em up game with excellent graphics, and speech synthesis similar to Starglider. However the manual leaves much to be desired in explaining what the game is all about. (ST) \$54.95 Can.

AUTODUEL (ORIGIN SYSTEM INC.)

Based on the board game Car Wars. This game puts you in a gladiator type role in the future where battles are won and lost on the road. Design your own custom road vehicle by souping it up with armor, and a wide variety of weapons, and then take a mechanic course, visit Joe's Bar to find out what is going on or stop over at the arena to practice your combat skills. (XE) \$69.95 Can.

STILL IN TOWN

ARCTICFOX (ECA)

(7.5) Can be best described as a ground version of Starglider. Hostile aliens have invaded the Antarctic, and are altering the atmosphere to match their home planets, and it is up to you in the Arcticfox to seek out the main fort, and destroy it. Excellent 3D graphics combined with an array of hostile enemy craft, and installations makes this one a real palm sweater. (ST) \$54.95 Can.

BATTLECRUISER (SSI)

(7.5) A follow up to Warship that uses the same features, including poor graphics, and abilities, but with a wider scope. Battlecruiser deals with tactical surface combat in the Atlantic during WW I and II. While WW II data disk includes the four major powers ships, the WW I disk only concerns itself with the British and German navies, and does not include the French, Italian, and Austrian navies. Battlecruiser is a must have game for the hard core wargamer. (XE) \$69.95

BALANCE OF POWER (MINDSCAPE)

(10) A game of geopolitics in the nuclear age, for one or two players, that lets you try your hand at being one of the superpowers. An extensive data base makes this simulation not only make Balance of Power play like the real thing, but an educational experience. four levels of difficulty offer a range of foreign policy options to raise your prestige value, but not at the cost of a nuclear war. Probably the most innovative and thought provoking game to appear in a long time (ST) \$59.95 Can.

OGRE (ORIGIN SYSTEM INC.)

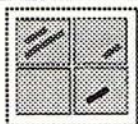
(6.5) The first wargame for the ST that looks, and operates almost identical on both the XE and ST. A futuristic game that puts you in command of a wide range of forces defending a vital command post against a robotic tank called "Ogre". Excellent graphics, and a friendly game system make this one an enjoyable game for all. Ogre allows you to build your own maps and choose which units you will command. Unfortunately you can only command the Ogre, in the two player mode. (XE/ST) \$54.95 Can.

CHESS MASTER 2000 (ECA)

(8.5) As the name implies this is Chess game with twelve difficulty levels, and the ability to show a two dimensional or three dimensional board. features include a large library of opening moves to choose from, and Chessmaster 2000 will give you a hint if you become stumped as to what move to make. For the beginner there is a teaching mode that shows all of the squares you can move a piece to. The expert player is not forgotten as library of one hundred "classic" games to try their skill against. (ST) \$64.96 Can.

(The number system: 1 for terrible, 3 for tolerable, 5 for okay, 8 for excellent, 10 for fantastic)

(c) AKA'87



WINDOW ON GAMING

When a new game is reviewed in one of the many Atari magazines the first thing one looks for is if the game is in an area of interest to them, and if the reviewer liked or disliked the game, and why. You read about the speed, complexity, ease of use (if any), realism, challenge, etc. All of your questions get answered for you by an objective (or as close to objective) person. Are the graphics fantastic? Is it love at first sight? does the manual aid in playing the game?

MANUAL!!!! Who cares about the manual you say. Oh there is the odd time when the manual gets mentioned, when it is very very bad and/or incomplete. But no one seems to really care about a manual that not only makes a game easy and quick to learn and play, but adds to the realism of the game.

Pity the poor lonely manual that gets shunned by most everyone, even the manufacturer, as they ogle the star of the package; the game itself. Depending on the complexity of the game you usually end up reading the manual, but do you really appreciate a good manual that enhances the game.

You should not be surprised by my obsession with manuals. It should be your obsession as well, and not just for games, but for all types of software/hardware. Just how much time would you devote to a game with a skimpy manual that does not give you a clear idea of what the game is all about or what all of the commands are capable. More than likely you will throw your hands and the disk up in frustration after trying to get the game to do something the manual mentions briefly, incompletely or go forbid not all.

Lets face it, a good manual makes life a lot easier in the long run by making you feel as if you got value for your money. I mean which would you rather buy; a manual whose manual makes it a pain in the butt to use or one whose manual simply and clearly explains how to get the maximum use out of the program without making you feel as if you need a Phd in advanced goobly gook. If there is one type of game that really needs a good manual to be the icing on the cake it is historical simulations.

Balance of Power's manual seems more like a textbook with its in depth explanations on how to interpret the vast array of displays. And besides explaining how to play this simulation there are sections with hints on how to handle various situations, and how they impact on your side.

One of my favorite series of games is Microprose's 8-bit Command Series. Not only are the different commands explained as to what they mean, but the different types of units are defined as to what elements makes them up, what they are best suited for, what terrain favors them and why. This seems like the sort of information that any wargame should provide. However the manual for Crusade in Europe goes beyond this basic information.

There is a discussion on tactics, In the case of Crusade in Europe the D-Day scenario also includes a tutorial as what possible strategies you could employ. And speaking of scenarios each one has a historical biography written on them to help put you there by discussing the situation, and what each side was up to.

Microprose is one of two companies that pays a lot of attention to the manuals that accompany their games, F-15 Strike Eagle, Silent Service, Kennedy Approach to mention a few. The other is SSI.

SSI's Colonial Conquest is another program whose manual greatly adds to the feel of the game by giving an insight into the way of thinking at that time. Especially attitudes about foreign countries and their inhabitants.

If there is one thing that is a must for a manual of an historical simulation to have, it is a background on the time period in question. The enjoyment that a game will give is enhanced if you know what was going on at the time as well as in the minds of the people. With this type of information one could argue as to whether you are involved in a game or an educational experience.

While most of you may not think about manuals so prominently you do think about them subconsciously. Think about that game you bought with big expectations only to have it now shoved away somewhere because you had trouble getting it to do what it claims to do. Or are you bored with it since you do not find the challenge to thrill you, and you openly curse the program for being a let down, but are you really, in the back of your mind, wishing someone had spent as much time and effort on the manual as the game itself.

So until the next issue here is to successful gaming! Keith Burnage

(c) AKA'87

THE ATARI USER COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR HELP

The following was received from the Wetmoreland Atari Computer Organization (WACO)

WACO's Jim Adamson explains. "WACO has been asked by a few user groups to circulate petitions to Atari in response to their recent claim that the translator disk in club public domain libraries is not public domain at all, and therefore cannot be used without expressed permission from Atari." Other translators, both public domain, and commercial of the 8-bit operating system were never questioned until Darek Mihocka, a Canadian college student, wrote an 8-bit emulator for the ST which could use the operating system from the translator disk. Atari supposedly claimed that an 8-bit emulator on the ST was 'virtually impossible' or 'useless'. Atari users know that when someone tells them that something is impossible, that challenges Atarians to do 'the impossible'. That is one of the reasons why we are so enthusiastic about our machines, or perhaps we should say 'WERE'.

After a year's work on his program, Darek then extracted the OS code from the translator disk which he thought was public domain, from his user group library in order to run the emulator. He posted a message on the Atari BBS to try to work out a public release of the program. Atari's reaction was a demand to either stop or face legal action so Darek stopped giving out test copies of his emulator. The WACO uploaded a public domain (advertised as PD in ANTIC) translator from its own archives to Darek who discovered that it would run his emulator 10 percent faster. GAG and WACO groups then demonstrated the emulator at the Buffalo show but, acting on legal advice, refused even Atari's own request for a copy of the program. Atari reps turned down an invitation from WACO to view public domain programs from WACO's library (8-bit) running on the ST. One said the emulator would never be useful or ever have player-missile graphics. Darek took this as a challenge and said in three or four weeks he should have player-missile graphics working. Is that dedication or what? Atari does not realize that the emulator would be the final excuse for 8-bit owners to buy an ST. It is time for the entire Atari community to unite and speak its mind."

The "new" Atari seems confused about how the "old" Atari distributed copies of the translator disk to user groups so that upward compatibility of their computers would be maintained. Several user groups received documentation and letters of explanation from Atari. We are asking all user groups to search any archives for copies of that letter and send copies back to WACO. Furthermore, we ask

you to present the enclosed petition at your next meeting, collect signatures, and send it by certified mail to Sam Tramiel at Atari. We believe an abundance of signatures would answer Atari's own question "Why should anyone want to run 8-bit software on the ST?"

Our support and success in this issue will remind Atari Corp. of the strength of user groups as well as how much the success of Atari means to each of us. Atari was once committed to upward compatibility of equipment so that customers would never feel they had wasted money in buying Atari hardware and software, a precedent that Atarians did not expect to see abandoned by the new company since it had created such intense loyalty for Atari Products. Even though we may enjoy the "power without the price" of the new machines, we want "a return to those thrilling days of yesteryear."

CLASSIFIED

Small items such as ads for articles wanted or for sale, questions, problems, tips, or other brief messages will be placed in this section free of charge to NCAUG members.

810 DISK DRIVE

With Archiver chip, drive designation button, and write to the back of disks feature.

For sale or straight trade for a 1050 disk drive.

John Hjalmarson

Days: 729-7551

Evenings: 1-257-4792

130 XE SYSTEM FOR SALE

130 XE computer, Rana 1000 Double density drive, disk case with 75 disks, and joystick \$350

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HOME SECURITY SYSTEM

by: DAN WILTON

As part of my grade 7 Science Course we were required to do a science project on our own. I decided to explore the possibility of building a Home Security System using our Atari 130XE. I wanted to be able to provide an indication that the home is safely secured, that is; there are no lights left on, no water in the basement and no windows or doors left open. I demo'd my working model at the April meeting and because of some of the questions I decided to submit a condensed version of my workbook to BYTOWN BYTES.

First I learned there were three methods of inputting information to the computer: the key board, the disk drive port and the joystick port. The joystick port provided me with exactly what I wanted. A joystick works by shorting out one of the wires to the ground, depending on which way you move the joystick. The computer detects this and sends a unique number to the program telling it which way the stick has been moved. Also connected to the joystick port are paddles which measure changes in resistance. With these two abilities I felt a home security system could be built.

Each joystick port contains 9 pins but the joystick itself only uses 6 of these. From reading the "Mapping the Atari" book, I learned that two of these wires were for the paddle and the last provided a 5v output. I bought a joystick connector from Radio Shack and wired all nine pins, then wrote a little program to help me figure out which wire did what. The wiring was as below.

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | |
| 1. white | 6. orange |
| 2. blue | 7. purple |
| 6 7 8 9 | |
| 3. green | 8. black |
| 4. brown | 9. yellow |
| 5. red | |

From "Mapping the Atari" I learned that the following routines were available in the Atari operating system.

STICK(0)- read joystick port #1
 PADDLE(0)- read paddle for port #1
 PEEK(336)- reads joystick button

Using these built-in routines and information from the ANTIC magazine, I wrote the following program to print out the paddle and joystick values to the screen so that I could see what happened as I connected the various wires together.

```
1 GRAPHICS 0
```

```
5 P=PADDLE(0):X=PEEK(644):Y=STICK(0)
20 PRINT "BUTTON=";X;"," JOYSTICK=";Y;"," PADDLE=";P
90 FOR I=1 TO 100:NEXT I:REM DELAY LOOP
99 GOTO 5
```

The first thing I learned was that the purple wire was BBBBAAAADDDD. When I connected it to the black wire the screen went blank, I lost my program and thought I blew the computer. This is the 5v output and should be used with caution.

From these experiments I learned that pairs of wires produced the following results.

	BUTTON	JOYSTICK	PADDLE
all unconnected	0	15	228
black & white	0	14	228
black & orange	1	15	228
black & green	0	11	228
black & brown	0	07	228
white & yellow	0	15	00

All other combination of pairs of wires, except the purple, produced the same results as the unconnected situation.

Using this information, I first wired up the joystick button (black & orange) to the window and was able to tell whether the window was open or closed. This approach would have limited me to only two inputs, the two joystick ports. To increase the capacity of my system I bought a 'normally open' security switch from Radio Shack. This switch then allowed me to use the other joystick wires, eg. the green and black. When the door was closed it was as if there was no one touching the joystick. As soon as the door was opened, the 'normally opened' switch closed and created a response, 11, at the joystick port.

From the above measurements I confirmed that the combination of wires with the white were for the two paddles. I knew the paddle would measure resistance and that is what I needed to use the photocells within my home security system. Under normal light the photocells, wired to the yellow and white wire, indicated a reading of roughly 25. When a light was turned on in the model house a value of less than 12 was returned.

I now had to write a program that would read the joystick port and depending on what it found would either continue to read the joystick port or would display a message warning the home owner that there had been a security problem.

When the program is first turned on the screen displays "HOUSE SECURE". When the program detects an open window, for instance, it would flash "ALERT" and give an alarm. Then flash "WINDOW OPEN". This sequence will continue as long as the

window is open. A similar sequence is used for; the door open, lights on, or water in the basement.

I also intentionally built the program so that once there had been a security problem the program would not return to its "HOME SECURE" message until the home owner reset the program from the hidden button. When both the paddle and the joystick were wired to the same port there was some confusion. I decided this was caused by the fact that the paddle used one of the joystick wires as the ground (i.e. the white wire). To overcome this problem I used both joystick ports.

To overcome the problem of intentionally left on lights setting off the alarm I had to put in a key that would allow me to shut off or activate this portion of the program. I accomplished this requirement by again using the Mapping the Atari book to determine a means of telling the program to monitor the keys and then recognize which key was pressed. According to this book, a PEEK in memory location 764 would give me a different value depending on what key was pressed. For instance, when no key has been pressed this location contains a 255, when the SET key is pressed a 44 is contained in this field and when the CLEAR key is pressed a 54 is returned. I then modified my program to only access the photocell routines when the SET key has been pressed and to stop monitoring when the CLEAR key has been pressed.

The main program loop was written as follows. Each of the subroutines can be of your own design.

```

90 GOSUB 9000:REM HOUSE SECURE MESSAGE
110 LOOK=STICK(1):BUTTON=PEEK(645)
112 P0=PADDLE(0):X1=PEEK(764)
128 IF X1=44 THEN LGHTON=1:REM SET LIGHT ON
129 IF X1=54 THEN LGHTON=0:REM SET LIGHT OFF
130 IF BUTTON=1 THEN GOSUB 1000:REM WINDOW
    OPEN
140 IF P1<10 AND LGHTON=1 THEN GOSUB 4000:REM
    LIGHT ON IN BASEMENT
145 IF P0<10 AND LGHTON=1 THEN GOSUB 5000:REM
    LIGHT ON MAIN FLOOR
150 IF LOOK=11 THEN GOSUB 2000:REM DOOR OPEN
160 IF LOOK=7 THEN GOSUB 3000:REM WATER IN
    BASEMENT
180 IF LOOK=13 THEN GOSUB 9000:REM RESET HOME
    SECURE
999 GOTO 110

```

It is clear from the work I have done that a simple security system can be developed from inexpensive equipment and an equally inexpensive Atari computer.

TIPS & BITS

by Ed Wilton

Here we are again with the second in the series of "TIPS & BITS" articles. You may recall, the intent of these articles is to pass along some of the hints and suggestions I have learned in the process of creating the XE disk of the month.

If you noticed that last month's article didn't make it into the newsletter there is a rational explanation. See the "Letters to the Editor" section.

For this month's TIPS & BITS I would like to highlight a couple of very worthwhile hints which our XE president, Paul Norton, described at the March meeting.

First, there was the speedy method of formatting multiple disks simultaneously. After loading your DOS, change the Drive number of your extra drives all to 1. Now, when you issue the command to format drive 1 all drives set to drive one will format simultaneously.

Paul also indicated that the copy 130XE program would work in a similar manner. His caution, for both processes, is that the drives should be of similar vintage, i.e. all 1030s or all 810s and should be running at the same speed. I haven't tested his theory, so if you have any problems call Paul, not me.

The second feature Paul pointed out at the meeting, is how to display text files to the screen without using a word processor. Now, this capability is clearly documented in the DOS documentation. However, for all those people, such as myself, who don't read documentation, I would like to repeat the procedure here.

The best way to describe this feature is via example and what better example than one using the NCAUG XE Disk of the Month. Let's assume you are working with the disk of the month from DOS and want to see something written in the text file. There are a couple of options; you could load your word processor and then load the text file, you could reboot the disk with BASIC and select the HELP file which reads the text file, or you could read the file directly from DOS.

From DOS, select the COPY option. In response to the prompt "COPY -- FROM, TO" enter the following: DOC.TXT,"E:" After a brief pause, while sufficient data is read from the Diskette, the contents of the 'DOC.TXT' file will be displayed on your screen. If the display is moving too fast to comprehend, it can be stopped and restarted by using the [CNTRL][1] combination.

ST PRESIDENTIAL BYTES

With a survey card determining my future as an author, this had better be good. This month, I hope to fill some of the "local news void", along with the promised info on the road trip. You may not want to hear more about the infamous Buffalo journey, you may even hate that in a column, but here it is.

Chronologically, the Buffalo AtariFest came first, so I'll begin with a short commentary on the actual event. Lots of ATARI enthusiasm was displayed, with more user groups than I thought were possible. When we showed them Bytown Bytes, they were definitely impressed. Many wanted to become part of our distribution network.

The big thrill for me was the software/hardware manufacturers and the dealers. Lots of new or updated products were there, and support for the ST was pronounced.

While Terry, Peter and Glenn shopped, I spent my time more fruitfully, game testing Midi Maze. Basically, you pilot one colour-coded "Happy Face" (NOTE: The original title of the game was a more apt "Kill a Happy Face") through a maze, greeting other smiling foes with two bullets to the chops. Each time you dispose of one of the little darlings, you move up one row on a music scale (something like the steeplechase water pistol games at the Ex).

The winner is the first to collect enough victims to reach the top. When you are hit, you experience a few seconds delay to answer for your shortcomings, pondering your happy face with "X"ed out eyes. This game will be an instant hit when it arrives, as it does support the "socialization" of gaming, which Keith Burnage predicts.

I reluctantly left the maze area to sacrifice my time for you. I attended a hot and sweaty Neil Harris (Director of Marketing Communications, ATARI U.S.A.) seminar. The following are a few choice tidbits:

- the ST sound chip (AMIE ?) has been finished but no prototypes have been produced due to difficulties in manufacturing them.

- the \$120 (US) blitter upgrade is still on schedule and will be available for 520 & 1040

STs (WHEN ???). RAM-Upgraded machines should not be affected, as it will run off the 68000

- GDOS (This is for programmers) will continue to be bundled with software (DEGAS Elite, Easydraw), but will only be available separately to registered developers or by talking to ANTIC. Publishing Partner is to be integrated with GDOS. By the way, an all-new developer's kit is being prepared

- ATARI U.S. 1987 marketing direction is twopronged: MIDI and education(college-level).

- XE - no new generation of 8-bit machines, but support will definitely continue. EXPRESS will be upgraded and will include an S.I.O. cable

- WORM Drive technology costs \$15,000 to get into, so ATARI will not

- Derek Mohawka - 8-bit emulator designer from Waterloo University. ATARI have been talking with him and will not give him approval to produce the emulator unless he releases the source code, so others can work with it. Besides, it will only run BASIC and only at 25% of the XE speed (which is slow enough already). NOTE: This is the ATARI story.

- the ATARI PC will ship in late June or early July for \$700 US

OTTAWA'S LARGEST SELECTION OF COMPUTER BOOKS



PROSPERO COMPUTER BOOKSTORE
128 BANK STREET (CORNER SLATER)
238-7683

- Buy an AMIGA. (Yes, he said it.) It has more colours, a faster frame rate than an ST (AEGIS Animator, Arctic Fox). It has better sound. But only if you have a lot of money to throw around. (That's better) Besides, the ATARI law suit against AMIGA (which might have been an ATARI) was settled favourably and the COMMODORE Presidents, both U.S. and International and senior U.S. executives have been fired.

- CD ROM - ATARI is interested, but not at current prices.

- the IBM emulator is still in the works, but the same people were sidetracked to finish the ATARI PC

- the crisp MEGA ST keyboard will not be available for the STs (sob!)

- multi-tasking will operate only on the 68020 machines, as the hardware memory manager needed won't work with the 68000 (Notice the well-known AMIGA crashes)

- the 32-bit machine will target the scientific and engineering communities, will be an add-on box (upwardly compatible), will be hi-res and will only cost about \$1 - 2,000 (U.S.) extra. There are no plans for a larger monitor.

- portables - Neil is tired of lugging an ST with him from hotel room to hotel room, but the market is limited and ATARI is not interested

- the modem is still en route and still \$100 (US). (NOTE that ATARI has only one factory at this time, where everything is made).

- the laser is still slated for release in May, at a paltry \$1500 (U.S.). We saw one operating and it looked good. Currently, there is a DIABLO Emulator and the trusty old ALT HELP keys.

- no firm price on the MEGAs, which I thought were to come out with the laser printers. There may be a promo deal to user groups for the MEGAs but the educational market is more of a target.

- the current low price on the 520 ST FM and monochrome (under \$600 US) may be the permanent price.

The slide show at the meeting appears to have been a big success. Hopefully, our budgets and our livers will enable us to attend more of these events. They are the ultimate way to get up-to-date info on the wonderful world of ATARI.

The raffle concept appears to need a bit of work. We only sold 68 tickets for the SM125 pedestal mono monitor, which meant a loss of about \$100. Special thanks to David Melamed of G-Plus for sweetening the pot with a \$150 software package. Hysterical enthusiasm for a hard drive raffle petered out when a \$10 ticket price was suggested. At \$5, we would have to sell about 200 tickets. So, future raffles will have to be for smaller items, such as modems or newly-released software.

One event which did go over well was the question and answer period. This will be a permanent fixture at meetings, so don't be reluctant to ask questions.

That's almost it for now. A note of thanks to John Kiss who spends endless hours selling memberships and maintaining the membership list. It is certainly appreciated, John, especially at this time of year. We have had a few more volunteers to help out. For example, John Turnbull has given up a tremendous amount of time in downloading and preparing public domain software disks. But, we can still need more help, especially at the back of the meetings. Thanx.

Ted McNicol

May 1987

ONE MEG

For any 520ST

Satisfy your need for more memory
the easy way!

Upgrade your 520 to ONE MEG

The memory is installed on a discrete circuit board designed on an ST using PCBoard Designer and produced locally.
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ST/uff

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Here I am: back again with more ST/uff. I missed last month's deadline, so there's twice as much this month:

NEWS

The word is that work is continuing on the **TT**, which will be a box that plugs into the ST's DMA port. The prototype has a pair of DMA ports and both a 68020 (32-bit) chip and a 68881 (math co-processor) chip.

In a recent electronic conference, **Trip Hawkins** (Electronic Arts' president, who has endeared himself to Atari owners by suggesting that they buy Amigas instead of ST's) promised to improve the Batteries line by adding copy protection. Someone should tell him that **DEGAS/DEGAS Elite** became the best selling ST software to date without copy protection.

8-bit owners and those of us who upgraded to ST's are familiar with **Happy Computers**, and their Happy drive modifications to 8-bit Atari disk drives. For those who don't know, Richard Adams (brother of Scott, of Adventure International) formed Happy Computing to manufacture and sell a hardware modification that allows duplication of heavily protected software. The modification has several pleasant side effects: true double density operation and higher I/O speed. The company now has in bread-board stage an **ST Happy**. This hardware device is a cartridge with software that will allow the duplication of most disk sizes and formats, including those of other computer systems. Given the problems the company had releasing version 7.0 of their 8-bit software (it took 18 months from announcement to delivery), it's surprising to see them announce the **ST Happy**, which should sell for about \$200.00 US.

Rights to the **IMG Scan** device I mentioned last month have been sold to **Softlogik**, who plan to bundle it with their very successful **Publishing Partner**. The scanner will also be available separately for \$99.95 US.

Rumours as to hardware delivery dates for the new ST products abound: in the eastern United States, the distributors are saying that the laser will be out before the Mega, which will be out in July, followed by the PC in August. In the mid-west, the story is

reversed, with the laser out in August. Atari US has apparently been trying to find a laser manufacturer who will lower their price so that Atari can bundle a Postscript laser with a 1040ST for \$5000.00 US. My personal favourite is the rumour that the Megas will be shipping in Canada first, which could be as early as June.

In an effort to combat heavy discounting of their product line, Atari US are negotiating with **Computerland** to carry the Megas. Part of the deal would have Atari raising the price of the Megas to give Computerland a better margin. The thought of the morons at Computerland trying to sell Ataris doesn't thrill me (sorry, that's not a nice thing to say about morons).

I was talking to **Marty Herzog** at Atari this week, and he had a bit of interesting news: he says the MEGA ST is now in CSA (Canadian Standards) testing, and they hope to be shipping limited quantities in Canada in late June. The biggest problem Atari has had so far is reliable blitter manufacture, which will mean severely limited quantities for the first few months.

Atari and **GST** have apparently been unable to come to agreement on the distribution of First Word Plus. We'll probably see it picked up by one of the Canadian distributors, although it will be pricey (expect \$200.00).

Rumours to the contrary aside, the **Atari PC** is a reality, although if they don't get it to market quickly, it won't be much of a bargain: a 640K 8mHz PC Clone with a mono monitor now sells for \$995.00 (as of mid-May), and that's with two floppy drives and 8 full-sized slots! The Atari machine will be able to run an ST 3 1/2" drive as a second drive (or a hard drive), and will be packaged with GEM and MS-DOS.

Speaking of PC emulators, the current version of **MS:EM** (1.02) is still essentially non-functional, although I understand that **Paradox** are working on a \$500.00 external box. No word if they'll ever get their software version working, or if they'll ever release version 1.2. There is another software PC emulator coming for the ST: **Avant-Garde Systems** promise that their **PC-Ditto** (\$89.00 US) runs 95% of all PC software at 4mHz.

BUFFALO ATARIFEST

A couple of weeks ago I was in Buffalo, New York (for a magic convention - **Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolics** - but that's another story), and I managed to get free to spend a day at the Great Lakes Atarifest. Congrats have to go out to Tilden Ismael and the Western New York Atari Users' Group for putting on

a great show. The booths included:

Alladin were there showing their disk magazine in both ST and XE formats. My initial opinion is that Montreal's faSTer disk magazine (\$9.95 US/\$12.95 Cdn.) is a much better buy.

Alpha Systems were there showing the just-released ST version of **Computereyes**, which is the first colour digitizer for the ST. Computereyes is a hardware/software package that connects between the computer (it plugs into the cartridge slot), and any standard video source (video camera, VCR, videodisk player, etc.). Capture time is six seconds for the low-res 16-colour or intensity level mode, twelve second in the medium-res 4-colour mode, and twenty four seconds in the 640 X 400 hi-res monochrome mode. Acquired images can be saved to disk as Degas or NeoChrome images. Computereyes sells for \$249.00 (US). They were also promoting their soon-to-be released **PowerPrint ST** and **Digisound ST** packages.

Analog Magazine were displaying the latest issues of both Analog and ST-Log.

Astra Systems had a bullet-proof **System HD+**, a 20 megabyte hard drive for the ST with a built-in double-sided floppy.

Atari were in a central tent area, with organized confusion ruling. I've been told that there was an Atari laser printer there, but I didn't see it. Overheard in the booth was the startling revelation that startup production of Megas, lasers, and PC's won't begin in Taiwan until June.

Best Electronics was doing a roaring business selling ripoff Magic Sacs for \$15.00 (plus \$40.00 for the ROMs). According to the salesman, all you have to do is get the "public domain" Magic Sac software to run Macintosh emulation. To set the record straight, no version of the Magic Sac software is public domain. However, I couldn't resist buying a 6" joystick extender (I own a 1040ST).

Cal-Com had there whole store there: a very good looking display of software. I bought **K-Switch**, **Goldrunner**, and **NeoChrome 1.0** (more on these later).

Inteletek is a company formed by the Western New York Atari Users' Group to market Atari-related hardware. They were showing prototypes of 4 St products: **NECES-ST** (\$34.95 US), a box that provides four switchable mouse/joystick ports; **Track Master** (\$49.95 US), a device that gives an LED display of your disk drive activity (track, side, protection); **Caps-Italizer** (\$19.95 US), a caps-lock

light built into your caps key, and and **IBM Compatible 5 1/4" drive** (\$209.95 US)

JNL Technologies were demoing **The Monitor Box**, which gives composite video and RF (television) outputs to all ST's for \$79.95 (US).

MichTron had their whole product line on display. I was particularly impressed with the graphics in **Goldrunner**.

Migraph were, in my opinion, the best of the show: showing off version 2.03 of **Easy-Draw** plus **Personal Art Disk #1**, plus news on soon-to-be released **Font Pack #1**, **LabelMaster Elite** (both now available), and **Supercharger** (allows the import of Neo and Degas images as well as scanned images into Easy-Draw). The star of the show, in my mind, was the mind-blowing **M/CADD** package (actually two packages: a 2D and a 3D wire frame modeler, each to sell for about \$200.00 US). The author was demoing the package(s), and could he make it (them) fly! The interface is the most complete I've ever seen: GEM drop-downs, on-screen icons (a la MacPaint), plus stroke recognition (the ability to recognize, for example, that a 'Z' drawn on-screen means to zoom in on that area) and keyboard equivalents. All of these are completely user reconfigurable, to a degree heretofor unseen: you can even change the language of the commands! Features include auto-dimensioning, extruding, 32767 layers, and much more. To say that I was blown away would be an understatement. This program will sell machines. **Liz Mitchell** (VP Communications at Migraph) tells me that they plan to port it to the IBM PC-AT after the ST version is finished.

PCA were showing the **Graphic Artist** with **Fontpack-1**, and two new symbol libraries: the **Electronics Library** and the **Desktop Publishing Library**. They were handing out very impressive flyers printed on an Epson compatible 9-pin printer.

QMI here's another booth that cost me money: I bought **DeskCart!**, which is a cartridge with 14 accessories and a battery backup for the system clock (\$99.00 US). Very well done, and the cart was set to the correct time when I got home!

Royal Software were showing **EZ Calc** (with its new graph accessory) and **EZ Data** (sold in Europe by **Robtek Software** as **DB Calc**).

User Groups: there were about 1/2 dozen Atari user groups with some pretty impressive displays, although most were primarily oriented towards the 8-bit machines. One of the most interesting products was Darek Mihocka's **ST Xformer**, which

allows the ST to emulate an Atari 800. Even better, because it emulates the 6502 microprocessor, it is also capable of emulating the Commodore 64 and the Apple II. There are numerous limitations: no joystick or paddle support, no player-missile graphics, very slow speed (about 30% of an 800), and it will only run binary and basic files. A bigger problem than all of the foregoing is the fact that Atari will not let Mihocka release it (even into the public domain) unless he also releases the source code, something few programmers would be willing to do. We'll have to wait and see what happens with this one.

Xanth were there, with their infamous **Midi-Maze** (sold by **Hybrid Arts** for \$39.95 US). For those who have been in Siberia for the past year, this game allows you to use the midi ports to link up multiple ST's (6 in this case) to play a first-person maze game, where the object is to survive a shoot-out with your opponents, who are represented on-screen by different-coloured happy faces. The best I could do at "**Kill a Happy Face**" (I still prefer the original name) was a second place finish to a seasoned professional (I think she was at least 8 years old).

NEW TOYS

In the past month, I've picked up quite a few new toys for my ST. Here are my first impressions:

A-Calc Prime

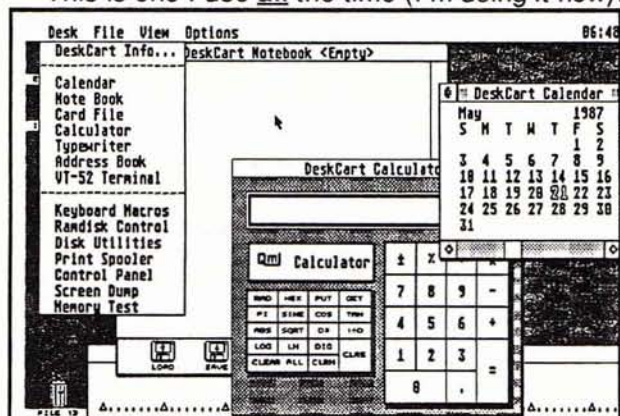
The upgraded version of Antic's A-Calc (actually Kuma's K-Spread) brings significant improvements and spreadsheet interface that rivals **EZ Calc**. My only disappointment was that they call predefined cell formulas "macros" (they're not).

A-Chart

This is great: what we all expected B/Graph to be: a stats package combined with a great graphing program.

DeskCart

This is one I use all the time (I'm using it now):



A cartridge/software combination that incorporates a battery back-up for your system clock and 15 tools and accessories: Appointment Book, Calendar, Note Book, Card File, Calculator, Typewriter, V52 Terminal, Keyboard Macros, Ramdisk Control, Disk Utilities, Print Spooler, Control Panel (theirs), Screen Dump, and Memory Test. I have yet to find anything that doesn't run with my **DeskCart**, and it keeps great time!

EZ Data

When I received this package, I expected the same **First Word** like interface that **Royal Software** used in **EZ Calc**. Instead, I found **Robtek's DB Calc**, which is challenging to learn, to say the least.

Goldrunner

The graphics on this game are better than those in most arcade games! The graphics are so fast you'll swear there's a blitter in your machine.

K-Switch

Like Switcher on the Macintosh, this program allows you to split the memory of your (1040)ST into two sides. I particularly like the ability to play an **Infocom** game while simultaneously drawing a map using **PaintPro**.

Logistix

Finally, a spreadsheet to rival the power of VIP! For \$149.00 **Logistix** gives you a powerful spreadsheet with true macros, a bigger command language than VIP, links between sheets, plus time management and project scheduling. The only real drawback is that it doesn't run in GEM.

NeoChrome 1.0

The release version of NeoChrome is finally out, although it remains to be seen how it will fair against powerhouse software like Degas Elite and Art Director.

Roadwar 2000

While a little simpler than **Phantasy/Phantasy II**, this "Mad Max" inspired game kept me up a few late nights until I finished the game. A tip for those starting out: save often.

Superbase

This looks really good: a relational database that runs in GEM, and will accept picture files (Degas, Degas compressed, Neo. IMG, in all resolutions) and word processor files (ASCII and First Word).

Note: for those club members who want to know, the database and spreadsheet software (A-Calc Prime, A-Chart, EZ Data, Logistix and Superbase) was sent to me by **Bill Petrie** of **ST Applications** for an applications comparison I'm writing for that

magazine, and the rest I bought.

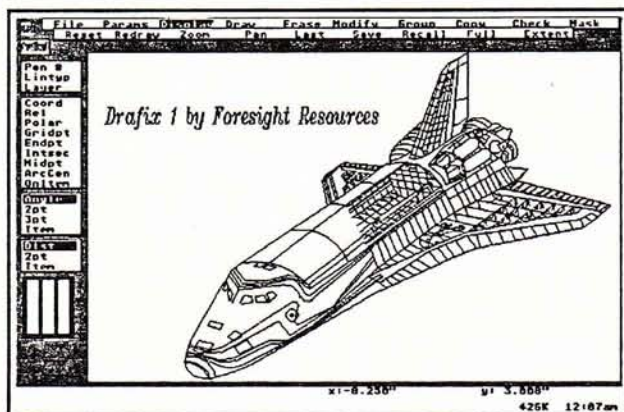
COMING SOON

Alliants is **Starsoft's** second release (**Pirates of Barbary Coast** was the first). There should be a demo disk in the club library by the time you read this.

Arkanoid is an arcade game by **Imagine Software**, based on the classic "Breakout". After seeing this you'll no longer have any doubts about the ST's ability to run arcade games.

Art Director is **Mirrorsoft's** high-powered paint program, with more features than you can shake a stick at (smear, scrape, perspective, etc., etc.)

Drafix 1 by **Foresight Resources** is a conversion of their PC CAD program. This high-powered CAD program should sell for about \$299.00 when it is released in June.



Bob Thompson and Jim Turner are presently doing beta testing, and should have a full review in the next few months. An interesting note: I saw **Drafix 1 Plus** running on an IBM PC-AT at the recent High Tech Show here in Ottawa. The AT was equipped with an 80287 math co-processor and an EGA monitor worth the price of an ST system by itself. Amazingly enough, even with all that power, the PC runs the same software noticeably slower than on the ST!

Fleet Street Publisher is the desktop publishing package that the Brits are raving about. While it may be powerful, it is slow enough to require a hard disk. The boys at **Softlogik** (the makers of **Publishing Partner**) can rest easy, at least until **Mirrorsoft** comes up with laser support.

SSI have three new games scheduled for June release:

Those that know me know that I'd walk to California to get **Phantasie III: The Wrath of Nikademus**. Keep your characters alive for transfer to the upgraded finale to the **Phantasie** series.

Rings of Ziflin uses animated window graphics

in a game where the object is for players to find the missing rings that will release the land of Batiniq from the evil Lord Dragos. Players enter into buildings in the game using a new kind of windowing animation which provides screen insets, zooms into room interiors, plus scrolling landscapes keyed to a strategic map and flashing character locator.

Wizard's Crown is a fantasy adventure game with tactical combat through dungeons and castles to retrieve a magical crown. The game allows you to create characters that move singly or collectively and offers a multitude of combat options, with up to five levels and over 80 hours of play for intermediate role-playing gamers.

ST Wars is **Miles Computing's** 10-scenario version of the arcade game **Star Wars**. The game, which was shipped last week, uses vector graphics similar to **Harrier Strike**.

Star Trek by **Simon and Schuster** is a real tour-de-force: digitized graphics and sound in an arcade-adventure based on the TV series.

VIP GEM 1.2 is the first upgrade to **GEM VIP** by its new owners (**ISD Marketing** of Markham, Ontario). Some subtle but important changes: greater speed, and the ability to define ranges larger than the screen with the mouse.

Xevious is **Probe Software's** conversion of **Namco's** arcade classic. It looks very good, but it's obvious that the programmers never played the game (the underground targets and the flags are missing). Even so, it's a winner.

STILL VAPOURWARE

Atari PC Emulator: I don't want a clone (I already have one): let's hope Atari makes a device that allows us to run PC software on our ST's. There may be method to their madness: I'm to the point with the PC clone (that I use at the office) that I think I'll upgrade it to an ST.

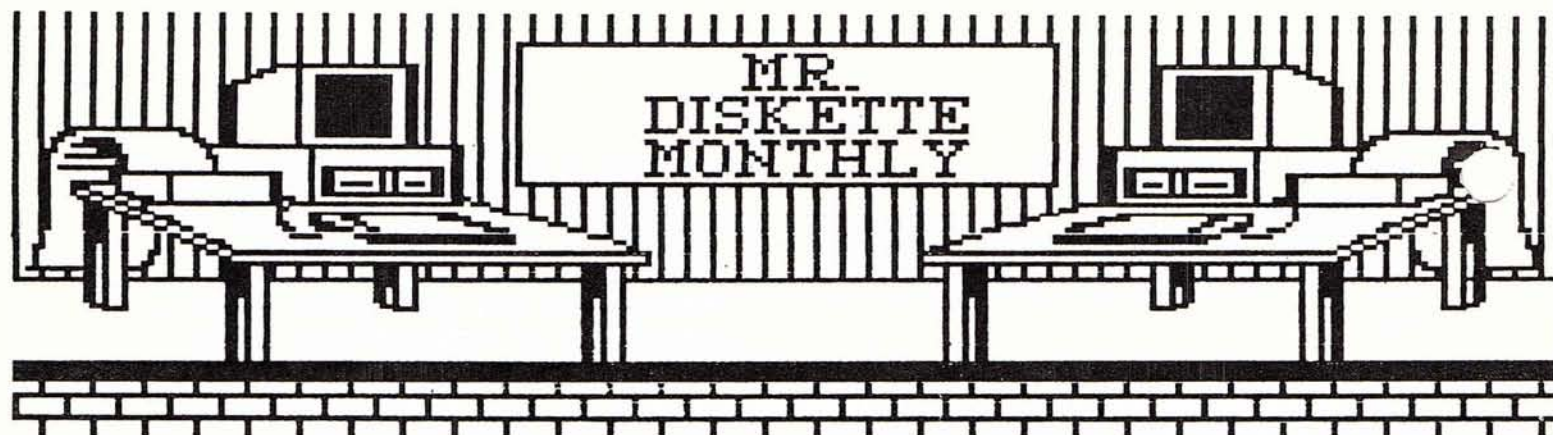
Dungeonmaster is the long-awaited second game from **FTL** (the makers of **Sundog**). I called the company two weeks ago, and they are pretty sure the game will be released this year.

Microsoft Write: if this isn't out soon, we all might wait for **Word Perfect**.

THE END

That's it for this month, but I thought I'd close with a few thoughts on software. With rentals available, and given the state of the art in disk copiers, it's easy to amass a library of software. If no one buys software, who's going to write it? My philosophy is simple: *If you use it, buy it!*

See you next month

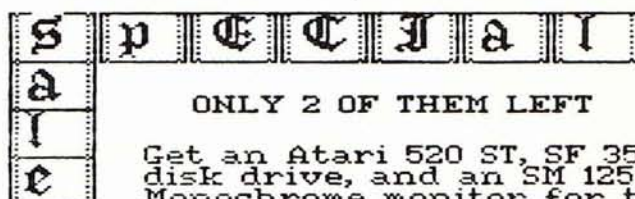


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ATARI on usenet

This is the second of the monthly extracts from the USENET information exchange for machines running the Unix operating system. As described last article, the special interest newsgroup called comp.sys.atari.st is very active and carries a lot of news, views and tips from many of the big names in the field and is often used by Atari itself to express a view or clarify a point.

Because there is no control over the amount of information that comes over the network and even less over the content, some months will be thinner than others. This seems to be one of those with the bulk of the information of interest to club members being on the various Atarifests which have been held around the US in recent months. Because at least one of these has been described by club members and written up elsewhere, most of these messages have been left out.

As was done last month, italics typeface will be used for my comments and the USENET article will be in regular typeface. The full text of the message will be printed unless there is a comment saying how many lines were deleted. The exception to this is the dozen or so control lines at the beginning of each which will be replaced with a one line heading and signature line combined. If the full name of the author is known, it will be included.

MISC QUESTIONS

There is a bug in the ST which causes the computer to crash if many folders are open at the same time. The limit is generally considered to be 40, therefore the name "40-folder limit".

NEW 40-FOLDER SOLVER from dyer@atari (Landon Dyer)

>In article <1191000011@exunido.UUCP writes:

>This morning I called for the first time the Atari BBS

>Raunheim near Frankfurt a.m. of Atari Germany.

>Surprise: there is a program which should catch

>the 40-folder limit: foldrxxx.prg. ...

Yep. Writing software at Atari Corp. is interesting because the place leaks pre-release software like a sieve. The foldrxxx.prg was indeed written here (by yours truly) and matches the current working version of the folder adder.

DALLAS ATARIFEST fromUACEO@UHUP

(University of Houston ACE) *Most of this message is a description of the Dallas Atarifest and repeats what we have already heard. There are three notes that are worth repeating though.*

Word Perfect was busy showing of their word processor Word Perfect. I got a complete demo of the

product (which wasn't even a beta version, 'it was thrown together for the show'). I played around with it myself and I can honestly say that it beats anything available in the States right now. However, there were some annoyances in the program which I didn't care for. The program (being a port from the MS-DOS world) is basically designed to be used from the keyboard, and is indeed strongest if used this way. The mouse response, on the other hand, was slow and awkward feeling. I didn't care for the slow response. Nice points: you can hit 'Y', 'N', or 'C' keys for dialog boxes requiring yes, no or cancel responses. Plus, all the options are reachable through keyboard input, not just the mouse. This is nice, but seems to defeat the purpose of the mouse, but does allow maximum flexibility. All in all, this should be the word processor to get for some time.

The greatest thrill of the Atari display was the presence of Dave Staugas, the author of Neochrome. Dave is a truly pleasant and cordial fellow, who really seemed to enjoy being at the show. He was showing off the one machine that had the blitter (IT IS FAST).

We even got a look inside the 1040ST which housed the blitter, and got to see the actual chip. The chip (yes one chip) was piggy-backed to the 68000. That is all. The new OS ROMs offered a choice from the OPTIONS menubar TITLE, simply called BLITTER. That is how it is turned off and on. The demo running was the flying bird demo, but with about 5-6 birds. The demo was running faster than ours with one bird! (I have this demo and will shortly place it on ATARINET).

Also, Dave showed us how to get to the animation in NEO v1.0. That is right, NEO 1.0 has animation built in, but you have to know how to get to it through the 'back door'. One note, the animation portion of NEO is NOT complete, but does work once you get it up. The trick is to select the GRABBER, then go over to the right side of the screen where the word GRABBER appears, with a blank box below it. Then you must place the arrow cursor on the 'R' in GRABBER, and with one pixel from the R to the left of the arrow and one pixel above the arrow, click on the mouse button. If you do this correctly, the icon of a movie projector will appear, and you are ready to go. PLEASE NOTE: The animation is not supported by ATARI, but Dave says that enough people figured it out themselves, and others wanted to know about it, so he broke down and showed it. If you have questions about how to use it, keep it to yourself. This is not documented, and you gotta figure it out for yourself.

Dave Staugas is now working on the printer drivers for the ATARI laser printer, and I may post another article which goes into what is being done with the

printer. We spent about a half hour talking about this.

Where is ATARI going - briefly:

MEGA ST - end of June. Only 2 and 4 meg versions. Will have blitter. Blitter upgrade for 520 and 1040 - September

Laser printer - End of July??? This is up in the air. TT and EST - your guess is as good as mine. (I think they really have to find a market for this stuff.) Atari PC and MS-DOS box - not until 1988 at the earliest.

8-bit line - new 65XE game machine should be just the ticket for Atari. has a plug-in keyboard, attachable gun, and SIO port. Basically it is a 65XE but is redesigned to look like a game machine. The price is \$150 (US) and the market is better for them than if they advertise it as a computer. I agree wholeheartedly!!! Good move ATARI. They say that this money will go towards the development of their high-end machines, the ST line!!!

From neil@atari (Neil Harris) In article <8705111650.AA11146@ucbvax.berkeley.EDU>, UAC EO@UHUP writes:

>ATARI PC - not until 1988, at the earliest. That's not what I said!! The rest of my report on where Atari is going is accurate, but you should be aware that the PC to begin delivery in late June or early July.

BLITTER UPGRADE From UDO40164@NDSUVM1 (A.D. Jensen)

A buddy of mine called up Atari on an unrelated thing, and asked whoever he was talking to what the status of the Blitter was. What a surprise... According to this 'source', 520 (that's all he asked about) owners will be able to buy an upgrade that has:

- a) A Blitter with new ROM
- b) 1 meg upgrade
- c) Nicad internal clock

The price she said? \$150(us). If this is true, this is the thing that Atari needs to get some of us crabs off their backs. My check will be in the mail 20 minutes after I hear that it's time to send in for it. If anyone at Atari has any comments, I'd sure like to hear about them.

This is not surprising as it is a similar product to the add-on boards that we saw at the Toronto Computer show. The price was about the same but that was for the board only. Chips will add several hundred to that price.

Well that's the extent of the information that is of general interest to club members over the last month. Many thanks to David Rowe for supplying us with the feed.

Terry Webb

Aliants

a preview by Glenn Brown

Those of you who have had a look at the back cover may be a bit curious about "**Aliants**" by Starsoft Development Laboratories. I was, so I called Hal McCrery of Starsoft to see what I could find out.

Hal is involved with two companies: **Starsoft Development** is a company that uses the programming skills of Star Wars programmers to develop entertainment software and **TDC Distributors** is a company formed to market Starsoft's (and others') software. Hal firmly believes that entertainment software should be reasonably priced: "**Pirates of Barbary Coast**" (their first ST release) was priced at \$24.95 (US), and Aliants will sell for \$27.95 (US). There are two factors that allow them to sell at these prices: volume, and the fact that they sell directly to dealers.

Aliants

The demo for this game, which is slated for release in July, is very impressive, although hard to categorize. The company calls it a real-time first person strategy-action space game (now there's a mouthful for you!). The demo features original sound, interesting fading effects, and arcade sequences: it is quite obvious that these people have learned a lot since "Pirates". Aliants, by the way, are the alien ant-like creatures that have enslaved the earth in the 24th century. As a rebel Bullet (space ship) pilot, you must help in the battle to save humanity.

The program fills two disks with a number of scenarios. On the first, you'll be required to pass a number of tests (arcade-like sequences) and then fly a mission beyond the sun to disable the Aliants' crystal ship. Once you succeed at this mission, you'll be promoted to Admiral and given the code that will allow you to run the second disk. As Admiral, you'll command your fleet on what Hal describes as a battle chess board. After the final battle (if you succeed), you'll land in New York City's Times Square for the digitized finale.

Three months after the release of Aliants, TDC will release **Aliants II**. In the sequel, it is discovered that 300,000 humans have been enslaved on *Insectus*, the Aliants' home planet. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, to set up a rescue fleet.

Hal estimates that there has been \$50,000.00 in programming time invested in this unique arcade-adventure game, showcasing the skills of 11 weapons programmers and 3 graphic artists. At \$27.95, it may be too good to pass up

Aliants... a first look

Aliants: The Desperate Battle for Earth has you responding to the call put out by the Allied Rebel Fleet. Seems the Earth has once again been taken over by hostile aliens who are a cross between ants and humans. Your job is to knock out the ship arriving from their home planet with the power crystals needed to power their space fleet for further invasions.

Well this one player game seems to have the makings of a good action strategy game. First the graphics are well done, and the various screens included with the demo disk show that someone has spent time to give the game a realistic look right down to shadows on the rock hewn walls of the command centre, Valley Forge.

This simulation room seems to be the thing I wish more games had. Namely a way to practice the skills needed to succeed at the game. This way you should not become too frustrated by getting wiped out in the actual game since you can hone your skills.

At first I thought that this was a mouse driven game from the look of the screens of the simulation room, but it is a game that relies upon the trusty joystick. Unfortunately I could not tell to much from the demo as it did not go beyond the simulation room so what the actual challenge will be can only be guessed at.

Keith Burnage

HARD FACTS for Supra Hard Drive Owners.

README.TXT from Supra Corp.

Supra Corporation has released their latest version of their Hard Drive Software, version number 2.61

This version adds many new features. You can use up to 12 logical drives, autoboot from drive C, hookup multiple hard drives, and use a destructive or non-destructive mapping. Any Supra HD owner can get updates by contacting us via the following:

503-967-9075 main number 8-5 pst
503-967-9081 tech support 8-5 pst
503-926-1980 Supra BBS 24hrs
CIS 76004,565
Delphi - Supratech

SUPFMT.PRG

You can now format multiple hard drives by changing the SCSI and LUN number for the drive. If this is the only drive you are using then both should be 0. After you set the space for the 4th logical drive, you will be able to access the next 4 logical drives. You can page thru the selections by clicking on the arrows.

NOTE: Atari currently is only supporting 4 logical drives. We are offering the 12 partitions as a service, Atari may or may not support this in the future.

SUPUTIL.PRG

ZERO:

This allows you to zero a particular logical drive on your system.

MAP:

This allows you to map out the bad sectors at a TOS level of a particular logical drive. **WARNING:** 'DESTRUCTIVE' maps by reading and writing to ALL sectors on the logical drive, so you will LOSE ALL DATA on that drive. NON-DESTRUCTIVE only accesses those sectors not currently used.

BOOT:

This allows you to enable or disable autobooting from your hard drive. A system file called SUPBOOT.SYS will be written to drive C. This takes the place of the SUPBOOT.PRG file which has been in your floppy AUTO folder. You will not see the file from the desktop, but other programs may allow you access to the file. DO NOT DELETE this file. SUPBOOT.PRG must be in the AUTO folder on floppy A: to allow this option to correctly setup your hard disk drive.

PARK.PRG

Has been modified to allow parking of multiple hard drives.

BLAST.PRG

This program allows you to view Degas or Neocrome pictures very fast from your hard drive.

AUTOBOOTING

Autobooting allows you to boot from your hard drive without a floppy. If you enable autobooting and you only have the SUPBOOT.PRG in your floppy AUTO folder you will not need to move the AUTO folder to drive C. If you have other programs which are run from a AUTO folder, than move the folder to drive C and delete SUPBOOT.PRG. If you do not want to execute the boot from the hard drive, hold down the <CONTROL> <SHIFT> <ALTERNATE> keys when booting. This will abort the hard drive boot and boot normally from the floppy. **WARNING:** DO NOT place SUPBOOT.PRG in the AUTO folder on drive C:.

NOTE: If you do not have the floppy connected when autobooting the hard disk you will not be able to access the floppy.

POWERPLAN

I'm not an expert on spreadsheets. As a matter of fact, I don't really understand them and I'm not sure that I see a need for them. So when Abacus Software sent the NCAUG a copy of their new POWERPLAN for review, I wasn't sure that I should take on the job of reviewing it. But the whole rest of the world loves spreadsheets and uses them for everything imaginable, so I thought that perhaps I should give one a try. The only previous experience that I have had with this type of program is a rather unhappy affair with Lotus that left me wondering why so many people raved about the program.

I have a few rules when it comes to software. If it uses more commands than I can easily remember, I won't use it. If it uses symbols or a syntax that is unconventional, I won't use it. If it takes me longer to learn the program than to set up my application, I won't use it. See, I'm not hard to get along with.

POWERPLAN comes with a very impressive manual of about 70 pages in a 3-ring binder and is complete with a comprehensive index. However both the book and the disk label call themselves "Powerledger" so I assume that there must be some sort of name problem. I'll use the name POWERPLAN, but if for some reason in the future, the other name is used, if it's from Abacus, this is it. The manual is very straightforward and begins with a fairly complete description of GEM and mouse movement followed by an introduction to spreadsheets. If you are already familiar with these, then you lose nothing by skipping them.

Now for the program itself. The spreadsheet is 65,535 rows by 65,535 columns. That makes over 4 billion cells. I can't imagine what you would do with that many pieces of information (outside of listing the names of everyone in the world), but the real practical limit is determined by your computer memory anyway. The program accepts three types of cell information; a value, if it is a number; a formula, if you begin your entry with an "=" sign; or a label, if you begin with anything else. The entry itself defines the cell type and is very fast and simple. Within formulas, the cell location can be specified by coordinates (row and column number), or by relative location (rows and columns away from the present location). These can be entered from the keyboard or by using the insert key to enter the current location's absolute co-ordinates or the help key for relative co-ordinates. The formulas can be up to 160 characters long, use all the common operators and functions including logical operators to return a value of 1 or 0 as well as AND and OR.

POWERPLAN is fully mouse driven and runs entirely under GEM. This means that all the common dialog boxes and drop down menu functions work and the desktop and accessories are available. Getting started is a piece of cake. Just position the cursor on the cell you want and type in the information that you want to appear there. The program comes up on the screen with the now-familiar grid of cells to which titles, row and column labels and values can be added almost as if it were a word processor. It is so simple to get started that I was sure that I was missing some essential step or would be unable to do anything with my work once I got further on.

Not so. POWERPLAN is off and running. When a cell is too small to accept the information, the mouse can be used to drag the right side larger. All the rest of the spreadsheet is moved to compensate for it. Complete rows and columns can be added or deleted at will, but there are obvious pitfalls to that little trick because as the amount of data and the number of cells increase, not all information may be on the screen at one time. I did once get myself into a problem when I added a row and affected the locations of all the relative cells in a formula down further on the sheet. A little care and planning will take care of that problem though.

As I said above, the spreadsheet is over 65,000 cells square so there is very little of it on the screen at any one time. The scroll bars move the window on the sheet in the usual way, scroll arrows move the window on the sheet one page in the indicated direction and the cursor arrows on the keyboard move the window one cell at a time.

Desk File Edit Input Format Options Graphs

PowerPlan ST

R)r37c3 : r37c1

	5	6	7	8	9	
3 March	April	May	June	July		
4						
5						
6	236.18	236.18	236.18	236.18	236.18	
7	250.54	250.54	250.54	250.54	250.54	
8	101.25	101.25	101.25	101.25	101.25	
9						
10	7	5	7	8	10	
11	5	10	6	3	9	
12	9	5	7	10	2	
13						
14	1653.29	1180.92	1653.29	1889.48	2361.85	

Graphic

R)r24c3 : r24c1

1653.29 1180.92 1653.29 1889.48 2361.85

There is a built-in calculator and a notepad which

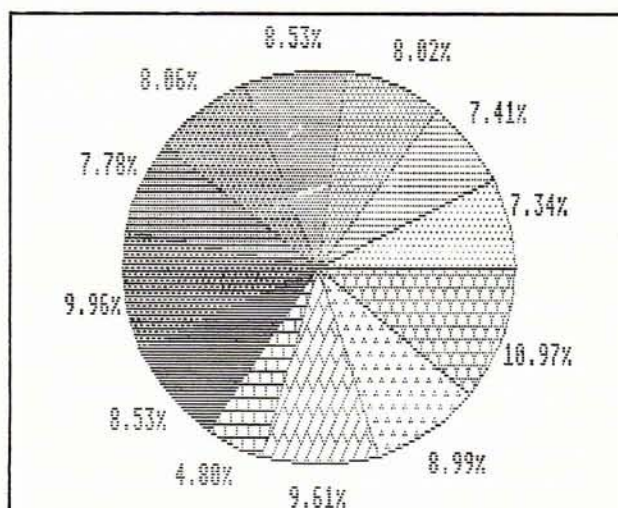
allows you to jot down information for later reference, printing, or insertion into another program or part of the spreadsheet via a scrapbook function. It is also possible to use the notepad to embed printer codes and text into a format so that documents such as invoices can be produced using data from the spreadsheet. All these functions work well and quickly, but I have to admit that the first run through some of them can be a little confusing. However, once the sequences are understood, the logic is straightforward and they are not at all difficult to use.

POWERPLAN also has a graphics option which is selectable from the menu bar. Find the area of the spreadsheet that has the information that you need. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the arrow over the cells that contain the information that you want on the graph. Drop down the "Graphs" menu from the menu bar and select the type of graph that you want. Before you can wonder why it is so easy, the graph is on the screen. I have to admit that the rendition is not elegant, but it contains all the information that anyone could ask for, is able to accept text, and can be a pie, line (with or without area), or one of 4 types of bar chart. It can also be printed from the print options and, with aspect ratio alterations that were available in the version that I had, even the pie charts looked good.

There are a few weaknesses to POWERPLAN and some features that I didn't like. But damn few. The program recognizes Epson and, the manual claims, compatibles, but the company should remember that there are degrees of compatibility (which, incidentally, the dictionary defines as "to suffer"). The printer support is better than most programs, and the control codes can be entered for various functions, but this feature pales in comparison to the quality and accessibility of everything else. The second complaint that I have has more to do with the working of the program itself. In order to do this review, I set up an accounting system for a conference that I am helping organize. I prepared a worksheet containing the heading and formulas that I would need to keep track of the expenses and receipts. It was simple enough to duplicate the format for each period and give each page a unique name (eg April/87). I loaded this label into the upper left cell of each page. But the program doesn't have a simple "go to" command. The only way to do it is to name a cell from the Input menu by entering the name on a line in a dialog box that comes up, then, when you want that cell, to call up a list of cell names from the same menu, find the co-ordinates of the one that you want, call up "go to a cell", and enter the co-ordinates. I want to be able to say "go to April/87" and, if it's unique, that cell will be in the upper left of my window.

There are a potful of other features to this program that I have tried and the are too numerous to even list. However, they all work well and do what the authors claim they should. It took me less than 25 minutes from the time that I opened the package until I had a spreadsheet up and working. That sheet still works for me now and I found that I didn't make too many mistakes in the setup. That is all because of the quality of the manual and the interface of the program. I have become converted. A spreadsheet has a lot of useful functions. I can get by without one, but POWERPLAN makes a lot of things I do much easier.

The purchase of a computer is a significant investment and owners should take advantage of any program that will make that investment pay off in either enjoyment or productivity. POWERPLAN from Abacus makes the world of numerical manipulation both enjoyable and productive. This package gives good value for the money and on top of everything else is so easy to use that it makes the mundane task of keeping track of expenditures fun. There are more complicated packages on the market, but, POWERPLAN will probably do all you need at a reasonable price and without you having to devote several months to learning commands and keystroke combinations. This program meets all my criteria of being easy to use, understand and implement and I recommend POWERPLAN from Abacus Software to anyone who isn't interested in becoming an expert in spreadsheets but would rather spend their time being productive.



POWERPLAN
Intergrated Graphics Spreadsheet
Abacus Software, Suggest Retail \$105.00

Reviewed by Terry Webb

ROADWAR 2000

Reviewed by Ted McNicol

There I was, minding my own business when I spotted a discarded green portfolio. Undaunted by the latest bombings in the U.K., I opened the case and produced a shiny new piece of software. Naturally, I tracked down the owner of the portfolio and several weeks later returned (reluctantly) his game.

Roadwar 2000 came to me in a rather unusual manner, but it is rather an unusual game for the ST. Strategic simulations (also the name of the company) have long been popular on the 8-bit machines, but the graphics demands placed on ST software designers has meant a dearth of these products. So, this was my first "war game", at least since the days when I used to set up toy soldiers and light firecrackers under them.

It took me some time to read the documentation (which is a little weak in explaining some of the activities, but this may also be a reflection of the amount of detail embodied in the game) and a few tries to get underway. This was because the game has a rather unsettling habit of killing off your gang at the least notice. The trick is to save the game often, at least whenever something good happens (such as a successful looting).

Once I got underway, and convinced my wife that I was almost finished the game, it was a mere 30 hours or so to the finale. To save you from the suspense of waiting for the end of the review, this game is fantastic. Run out and buy it. But save the last copy for me.

The basic story line is that North America (yes, Canada and Mexico are included in the cast) is in a mess, what with a plague and a few cities nuked. Your task is to find and gather 8 scientists who can cure the population. They are scattered across the map, and clues to their location are not easy to obtain.

The remaining 120 urban areas are controlled by militia (renegade or lawful), the mob, reborners, survivalists, bureaucrats, the invaders, local gangs or no one. Each of these entities has a certain way of treating visitors. For example, bureaucrats expect 10% of your goods and survivalists have a penchant for sniping. The reborners towns are a lot of fun, as they offer to give you their town. If you take it, expect a lot of desertions.

In the towns, you can scout around for the rulers, search for loot, meet exciting people or find usable vehicles. You can pick up or drop off articles in a cache. This is useful, as you can only carry a limited

number of people and goods in each vehicle, and you lose it all if the vehicle is destroyed. There are 19 different vehicles, and each has a number of attributes related to fighting, defense and survival.

When you see people (either through looking or stumble on them), you have a number of options. Backing off is definitely frowned on, firing a volley is unpopular and unlikely to gather recruits, and sending envoys to get recruits may be sending sacrificial lambs. You may also attract the attention of the town rulers or of mutants, who can be driven off but leave your men diseased. There is absolutely nothing more fun than running out of gas with a bunch of starving, diseased men.

There are also 3 key individuals who can improve your health, training, or political savvy. They will approach you and offer to join from time to time. As well, healers will offer to trade medicine for anti toxin, which is the only thing to cure the mutant's disease.

This is a complicated game, and although I finished it, I still go back in for a quick battle and to learn more. For example, the vehicle limit is set at 6, and I only found out it could be increased through tactical combat (hands-on) much later.

One hour equates to a turn, and you can be sure you'll celebrate more than one New Year's. Between the cities, besides your men consuming food every few hours, the vehicles deplete your stores of gas. You can loot along the way, although the pickings tend to be slimmer.

I mentioned tactical combat earlier. Once in a while, a rival road gang (of varying strengths) approaches and you are given the chance to snuff them. At first, I took the quick route, using Abstract instead of Tactical or Quick Combat after deploying my vehicles. Boy, was I missing the fun. This is where the graphics come in, but don't expect Time Bandits action. It is all deliberate, strategic activity, allowing you to show your stuff. I far prefer to fight these battles in the country, as I tended to crash my vehicles in the city, until I discovered Brakes.

The game is chock full of interesting little details, such as the possibility of playing in a certain theme park in Anaheim. However, in one case, the rides were poorly maintained and I suffered a few casualties. My men mutineered when I allowed a side trip to Fort Knox. Some of these diversions, such as a trip to the casinos in Vegas, paid off in increased morale.

I could go on and on, but I will conclude this review with the following observations. Each game is different, as the key locations and attributes shift. When

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in a game, make copious notes on your progress, and whenever possible, fill the caches. Upgrade your vehicles, and ensure you have lots of men.

Save your game regularly, for misfortune can strike at any time. I lost 11 vehicles and 600+ men in one encounter with an invader death squad.

And my final recommendation. Buy this game, it is an excellent introduction into a new genre of strategy games for the ST. Overall, I'll give it an 8 out of 10.

ABOUT THE COVER

This month's cover contains parts of two Degas pictures created by Glenn Brown. Both pictures are based on ZZ Top record album covers. Glenn re-created many record album covers and a series of sports car pictures in the early days when he first bought his ST.

On page 28 of this issue Jim Turner has created a little filler illustration of bamboo. This illustration was done with Degas Elite. Very impressive.

The GOLDEN PATH

Imagine a time when myths were simply the plain truth and magic was a second nature among the people. Imagine a place where dragons were as common as birds and demons roamed freely about the land. As difficult as it may seem, Firebird can warp you to this old Chinese settlement as you, Y'in Hsi, must travel along the Golden Path and continue where your father left off.

Firebird Software has produced a graphic adventure game that is fully mouse driven and is complex enough that it will challenge any seasoned adventure game player. This is another example of the new generation of software that is becoming available which is written especially for the ST and may be ported to other machines later.

When you boot up the game, the monitor is split into five parts. The largest is the landscape screen. This is where you control your character (the monk) and see what is around you. Next is the vine. This is important to your character because the vine shows all your endurance and health. When you are hit by a monster or other disasters that may occur, your vine will wither. The only way to make it grow is to eat food and solve puzzles. The vine also reduces every second because you're constantly using energy. When the vine has reduced to nothing, you're dead.

To the lower left of the vine is the Book of Knowledge which explains your current situation, what you see, and what you are carrying. This will become useful when you come across rooms where you can't really pick out the objects you can obtain. Below the vine are your pockets where you can carry objects you find along the way. Lastly, you have the Path Screen. This shows you which paths you can take and comes in useful in various screens. Without the Path Screen, you can mistake buildings and other places on the screen as being important when they don't really have anything to do with the story.

This game is a product of Firebird, whose most famous product till now has been "The Pawn", and the graphics style of this game is very similar. Because of the diffuse detail, the objects that you need are often blended into the landscape and the Book of Knowledge is needed to find them.

The first problem I encountered was the mouse

control. As you progress through the game the control becomes easier, and if you play enough, it will come naturally. Your character (Y'in Hsi) is positioned in the middle of the screen and can be moved by the cursor. As well, he can pick things up, put them down, throw them and fight.

Instead of a score, in Golden Path you are rewarded by going up steps. There are one hundred. For example, if I killed the dragon, I might be awarded 3 steps therefore I have 97 steps left. In order to regrow your vine, you can solve puzzles. In the game there are about 50 puzzles. By puzzles they mean, for example, if you give the starving man the joint of meat and he gives you an object, you've solved a puzzle. Not only does your vine grow, but you also move up a few steps. In the same way, if you do something that is not good or harmful, like kicking the beggar, you will lose vinepower.

Just to make it more challenging, there are also goblins who are little guys that enter the screen when you have been there too long and take your vinepower. You can tell they're coming when you hear mean-like music. To avoid them, you have to keep moving along the path but there are times that they come no matter what you do.

I found this game very enjoyable but you can't save your game. This causes it to sometimes get boring because every time I died, I had to begin at the start again. Otherwise I found this game had great sound, detailed movement, and an interesting story. To find how to complete the game you must play it because it tells you during the game (I have not completed it). Maybe someday I will.

This game is not for the beginner but if your taste runs to graphics adventure games that take as much thought and planning as playing then maybe you should look at The GOLDEN PATH by Firebird.



ST DIGI-DRUM

By
TWO-BIT SYSTEMS
from Microdeal U.K./U.S.A.
Distributed by MICHTRON

Review by Ted McNicol

The above convoluted listing of companies involved in getting you this product may give some indication of the route it has taken. Add to this the fact that there are 4 pages of English instructions and 9 pages of German text (larger type?). The intrigue grows.

When I was at the Buffalo Atari-Fest, the Michtron booth was displaying a number of new products, including this one. At the age of twelve, I started taking drum lessons. In Sea Cadets, I quit because they didn't need any more drummers. At the age of twenty, I bought a set of Ludwigs and started taking drum lessons. So naturally I whined and pleaded with the folks at Michtron for a look at this product.

Could it fill the gap in my life? Would I never take the sticks out of the closet again? No, but I have now discovered the Great Composer. And the product has passed a further acid test. My son, Mark, who has turned up his nose at some of my favourite software, took to this package like a duck to soup.

But what does it do? How does it work? A very simple menu bar appears at the top of the screen. The cursor keys are used to move across and to pull down the desired window. For instance, the Play Song option is activated by the down cursor and plays the song which is currently in memory.

The Edit Pattern window gives a grid with 16 rows, each of which contain one instrument, such as closed hi-hat, electric snare, clap, or a drainpipe. With a REPLAY cartridge, which is another new product I hope to tell you about later, it is possible to sample other sounds and load them. The grid has anywhere from 4 to 32 columns, with each column equating to a beat.

The instrument to play is selected by entering a 1 or a 2 (equivalent to the ST sound channels) in the column on the row for that instrument. Sounds simple. It is. The only complaint I have here is that to get down to the bottom of the grid requires pressing the

cursor key 16 times (no repeat feature or vertical scrolling).

Once a pattern is built up, it can be saved and the next pattern can be entered. Up to 99 patterns are available, which allows for a very complicated song.

The Edit Song option is where you put together the patterns. Up to 70 steps can be linked, and steps can call for patterns to be repeated up to 99 times. Each step is numbered and there is even a branch feature, to go to a particular step. This could save on entry, in repeating a number of patterns for a continuous loop.

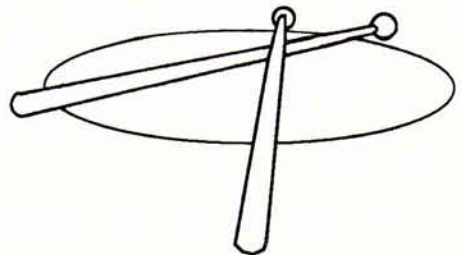
Other useful features are not neglected. Two playback speeds are provided, although 20Khz is recommended. The tempo of the songs or patterns can also be adjusted, between 1 second wait per beat and less than .1 second wait per beat.

And of course, patterns, songs and even sound samples (if available) can be saved to disk for perfection later.

The ST speaker is somewhat strained by this, although the sound definition is quite good. When two sounds are selected per beat, it is difficult to identify both. However, the REPLAY cartridge appears to allow for hookup to a stereo, which would improve immensely on the sound quality.

I was very impressed by the ease with which I could learn to use this package. As you know, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and my son and I have spent a lot of time congratulating ourselves on our creations. For a professional musician, this product could have a lot more utility or it could be only a toy. But for me, it has provided more than a few hours of fun.

Would I recommend buying it? Only for those 90 % of you who are frustrated musicians. For the rest, too bad for you. I give this package a rating of 6.5 out of 10 on my admittedly biased scale. With a REPLAY cartridge, if the promised features work properly, this could easily climb to 8. Even without the cartridge, I like it.



LABELMASTER elite

Reviewed by Terry Webb

At the time that last month's Bytown Bytes was at the printers, I had a chance to talk to people from Migraph who had kindly supplied the copy of LABELMASTER which I had just reviewed. I began to list off some of the things that I had found which I felt could be improved and the answer I got was a smile and a new disk to try. LABELMASTER ELITE is the next generation of this program and contains so many improvements and new features that I almost considered another review.

The mail list manager has been improved by the addition of a merge function so that several lists can be combined and it is also possible to import an existing list from another program. (The manual suggests that you contact the company for details but I was successful by just carefully altering the formats so that they were the same and reading it in.) The label format now has a 48 character comment line which can be used for information about the person and can be printed if desired. However, this field cannot be sorted which is a feature that would be handy. In the new version, personal, business or all entries can now be printed and the printing can start at any record selected.

The original program was good, but LABELMASTER ELITE, just for its disk label capabilities alone should be an essential part of everyone's library.

The graphics editor has undergone a number of changes with the addition of a mirror option in the replace block mode. This permits you to cut a block and then replace it with a mirror image of itself oriented in any direction. Cut and Paste has been enhanced to permit you to cut from one design, store it on the clipboard, load another design and paste the portion back in. This image remains on the clipboard and can be used for multiple designs. A few new functions have also been added to the tool box so that you can now draw frames, solid boxes, lines and circles in much the same way that other drawing programs work.

There is one important point that I neglected to men-

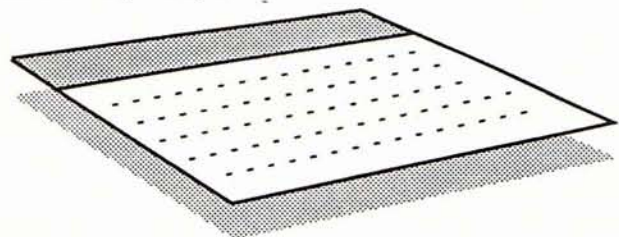
tion in my original review and lends itself well to the new features and that is that LABELMASTER in both forms will use Printmaster graphics. This gives the user an enormous library of designs which can be used as is or altered and combined utilizing the graphics editor functions available in this program.

Now for the really good news. PRINTMASTER ELITE has an option to print 3 1/2 inch disk labels. With a graphic on the left side, or a graphic on the right, or three graphics strung together to make a design the whole way across (the use for pasting the same block into several designs now becomes clear). Depending on the design, either 7 or 11 lines of text can also be printed on the label and there is provision for a top line, which when printed in superscript will fit perfectly on the top edge of the disk. Nice touch. There is another option which will print the disk file catalogue of up to 57 files on the label automatically.

There are other options which allow you to print either 3 or 4 inch long labels or cards as well as an enhanced freestyle label option which can now be saved.

My biggest complaint with the original program was that the printer support was very weak if you owned other than a "standard" printer. LABELMASTER ELITE has solved this by allowing you to embed specific printer commands as control codes in the label text. This is a little clumsy, but it works fine. My other complaint was the limited address capabilities and I'm sorry to say that I still can't send a letter to Europe. (One out of two isn't bad.)

To top it all off, Migraph has a deal for beautiful disk labels with 5 different coloured borders. This is too good to resist. The original program was good, but LABELMASTER ELITE, just for its disk label capabilities alone should be an essential part of everyone's library. Buy it.



HARDBALL

By Accolade Entertainment Software
for the Atari Colour 520 or 1040 ST
with TOS on ROM.
Price \$ 54.99

The Montreal Expos and the Toronto Blue Jays are back in the swing of things and the Hockey season is winding down with just a few games to go. So the release of Accolade's HardBall could not have come at a better time for hardcore baseball enthusiasts.

Basically, HardBall is a action baseball game allowing the user to take turns at being the pitcher and the batter. Where some games portray the user as the manager of the team, HardBall put the user right in the thick on things. HardBall can be played by one or two players. If two people are playing two joysticks are required. For one player games the player must use the mouse.

When your team is at bat, you have the option of one of nine different swing locations. These swing locations are in the shape of a tic-tac-toe grid. The default location being right in the middle center. If the player wishes so, they may also bunt. If your batter is a switch hitter you have the option of having him bat left or right handed. You also have the option of bunting. If you manage to get a runner on base you can have that runner attempt to steal a base, but beware the computer's catcher has quite the strong arm. Some the managerial decisions you can make when your team is at bat are Player substitution and exchange, and the switch hit option if that player is switch-hitter.

When your team is in the field you the pitcher have the option of four pitches. Each of the several available pitchers on each team has four speciality pitches which range from a Fast ball, slide, curveball, sinker, change-up, off-speed and screwball. After selecting the type of pitch you are then required to select its location from the tic-tac-toe box. The default location being the middle center, which is right down the heart of the plate. When your pitch is hit by your opponent you take the place of the fielder closest to the ball. As a fielder I have caught pop flies, line drives, made a few double plays and came very close to a triple play. With runners on base you can set up your infield for the double play. You also have the option to swing

your outfield right or left depending on which side the current player at bat is hitting from. The other managerial decisions available when you are pitching are player substitution and exchange and an intentional walk to the current batter.

The player substitution option allows you to bring someone of the bench to replace a current player. Preferably that player has better statistics than the current player. Of course if you are replacing someone at the pitcher position the player should a pitcher himself. In the late innings you will find that the your pitcher will become tired and his pitches will be hit more ofter and harder. You can then call in your ace reliever to try and put out the fire. Likewise if you hitters are not performing you can pinch-hit for them to drum up some offense. The player exchange option allows you to more two or more players around within the field or in the batting lineup.

Some interesting features that I have come accross are the ability to have hit and run plays, squeeze plays.

In conclusion I found HardBall was quite additcting. It offers just the right mix of acton with managerial decisions. Its animation is almost video-like, the wind-up of the pitcher and the swing of the batter are nothing short of realistic.

Craig Tremblay

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COLONIAL CONQUEST

Colonial Conquest is the second world domination game available for the ST, and follows fast on the heels of Balance of Power. But while the idea of controlling the world is the goal of each game they are as different as STs and Amigas.

This game gets a definite thumbs up, and will be greatly appreciated by players of the boardgames Risk and Diplomacy. While the major playing pieces are the army, navy, and economic clout of a country, when playing against human opponents your diplomatic skills will play a big role to get yourself out of the proverbial corner.

This game is an excellent way of introducing a new comer to the field of historical simulations

Colonial Conquest is a one to six player game that is a conversion of the XE game by the same name, from SSI with some slight improvements over the 8-bit version in the area of graphics and the speed at which the computer decides it moves. This game is rooted in the time period of the Age of Imperialism (late 1800's to early 1900's). As the head of one of the six major countries, Japan, England, France, Russia, Germany, or the United States, the destiny of your country is based upon the global aspirations of all of the players, and while this game is labeled as an introductory level game, the skill of the players has a direct affect on the complexity of the game.

This game is an excellent way of introducing a new comer to the field of historical simulations. A major asset is the fact that it is easy to learn by just popinting and clicking to carry out commands, but yet it is not so simple that it does not challenge the intermediate or expert player, and one will not outgrow it as their skill improves.

A major indication of how quick it is to learn this game comes from the manual. While only 11 out of the full 26 pages are devoted to the rules of play, that are presented in a clear and concise form. The final 12 pages feature a narrative on the time period that is well worth reading as it gives an insight into the thinking of the major countries. Included with the manual is a laminated map with the world broken into its various countries, and 2 large maps with the historical set ups on them.

If manuals are something you just scan through, and then toss away, then at the very least look and study the back page for the simple fact that it will affect which country, and the type of strategy you will employ. Strategy is an integral part of Colonial Conquest, and if you do not know what your country, and the other countries capabilities are you will be in for a lot of headaches.

Which scenario you will play will affect how soon trouble will start. Choose the Standard scenario, I like to refer to it as the free for all scenario, and each major country will only control its home territories, while the 120 minor countries are under their own rule. The 1880 and the 1914 scenarios are historical in their accuracy in that along with those areas that make up a major country it also has control of those minor countries controlled by them. England for example in the 1880 scenario controls Canada, parts of North and South Africa, Australia and India.

One good feature of this game is that if you do not enough human players to control the 6 major countries the computer can fill the void. The computer can be set to play all or as many major countries that you want it to, and the skill at which the computer will play at for each country can be set separate from the others. How many active major countries there will be in a game is affected by putting a major country in a neutral status which turns it into another minor country, with some limitations on what an active major country may do to it.

After setting what sort of global situation you wish to test yourself against, you set what score decides the winner from a low of 500 points to unlimited with total world conquest the final outcome.

Playing by yourself limits the scope of the game since you cannot make delays with the computer

If Colonial Conquest is starting to sound like it has little in common with Balance of Power's reliance on diplomatic skills, and strategic thinking, think again. While you could attempt to win by taking on not just the minor countries, but the major countries as well, you will find that fighting a war with ten fronts is impossible. Besides you would be missing out on the games most innovative and fun feature. Namely diplomacy it self.

Playing by yourself limits the scope of the game since you cannot make deals, treaties, etc. with the computer. Dan Cremak, the designer of Colonial Conquest states; "there should be 3 to 6 human players for the most effective use of this feature of the game. While one of the active players enters his moves, the others may make treaties, lies, backstab, threaten, and exchange information in any way they wish."

This game does not just rely on the program, but on how the human players wish to deal with each other, a major plus in my book of what I liked about Colonial Conquest. Another plus is the use of the STs graphics to create an 8 screen color filled world map that shows an up to date world situation.

The hack and slash factor of Colonial Conquest is actually a small part of the game mechanics. Each game year consists of four seasonal turns, spring, summer, fall, and winter. Spring is the major turn as this is when you spend the money in your treasury, and affects what moves, and tactics you will be able to execute during the other three turns.

Besides building armies and naval fleets to protect what is yours, and gain what is needed, you can fortify countries to increase their defensive capabilities and make it more expensive for the opposing players to spy on it, loan money to a major country as a means of sealing an alliance of ending a war, against a computer major country this is the only way to end a war, or a minor country so it can build up its armies to resist the less than amorous advances of a major country. Knowing how many troops are in a major or minor country is found out by spying on them, and when you decide to take over opposing countries subversion is handy to weaken a minor countries armed forces or cause a coup which gives you instant control of it, but no victory points.

Winning is not possible unless you gain victory points, and increase your treasury to carry out your strategy. A point is awarded for each battle you win, or deducted if lost. Additional points are earned for taking control of a country, and taken away for losing control. The treasury increases with each new country you control, and controlling an entire region earns a bonus. At the end of each turn you can see the high score displayed in the upper right corner of the screen, and by pressing the right mouse button you can access the various functions at the top corner including the scores for all of the countries, which will affect how you treat them. After all why let somebody else win?

Okay by now you have perceived that I like this game very much, but why buy this game when Balance of Power is also available. First off this game is much easier to learn and play and can be enjoyed by a wide range of age groups, thus making it more desirable for those just learning about strategic games. Not only that but the fact that you can have up to 6 players matching wits against each other makes this a very sociable game. In many ways Colonial Conquest is the computer equivalent of the classic board game Diplomacy. In my review of Balance of Power I complained about how even at the beginner level it was tough to win. Not so with Colonial Conquest since you can increase the skill level of the computer to match your skills. This game makes a good starting point before taking on Balance of Power.

While Colonial Conquest shares much in common with Balance of Power it is also different enough that it stands apart from it. Firstly the time periods for each game are a century apart, and Colonial Conquest deals with six, not two, super powers. And as I said earlier the fact that six human opponents give this game a depth not found in Balance of Power, plus playing solo in Colonial Conquest does not involve the same sort of skill and challenge provided by Balance of Power. Colonial Conquest because it is best played with several human opponents makes it a very sociable game, and this dependance on what the other human players are up to makes the player interaction aspect of this game very challenging.

While Colonial Conquest is an introductory level game according to SSI, the level you will play at is affected by the skill of the other players, and any other additional rules you will throw in concerning the disclosure of secret treaties or deals between several players. The skill level and complexity of this game is only restricted by the players.

What makes Colonial Conquest so good is the fact that it has so many good points going for it. From graphics, ease of play, the cause and effect of the major countries, and the all important human element. Congratulations to the game designer, Dan Cremak, and the folks at SSI who can put another feather in their cap.

COLONIAL CONQUEST
from Strategic Simulations Inc.
for the 520/1040 ST (color)
priced at 49.95 Canadian

reviewed by Keith Burnage

(c) AKA'87

ST WORD WRITER ST

REVIEWED BY

M. BERNIE ZGOLA WITH INPUT FROM "JIGGS"

INTRODUCTION

TimeWorks were kind enough to supply the NCAUG with a copy of WORD WRITER ST for review early this year. Our past magical president, knowing that my better half owned the Zgola ST and used it primarily for important matters such as wordprocessing, asked her to review this program. After several months of intensive use (95% by my wife) I am pleased to write this article and report that this word processor is indeed the best overall issued for the ST line of micros. It is not perfect: simply the best available at this time

PACKAGING - PRICING

Packaging of the product is one of the best I have ever seen. The manual, bound in sturdy plastic ring-binder with pocket for the disk, is comprehensive and on quality paper stock. A slip cover is also provided in the same classy black vinyl - a professional looking product on anyone's desk or bookcase. Pricing is around the \$100 range with discounts available, especially to NCAUG members.

PICTURE = 1000 WORDS

In order to fulfill the above, practice with and show off the capabilities of PUBLISHING PARTNER, and give you first hand views of the features available in WORD WRITER ST, I have decided to include the following figures:



Fig 1: WW Screen with Help menu toggled

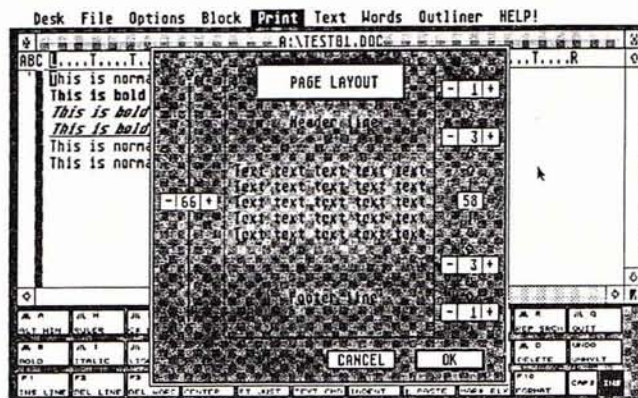


Fig 2: WW Screen with Page Layout toggled



Fig 3: Partial WW Screen with Replace toggled

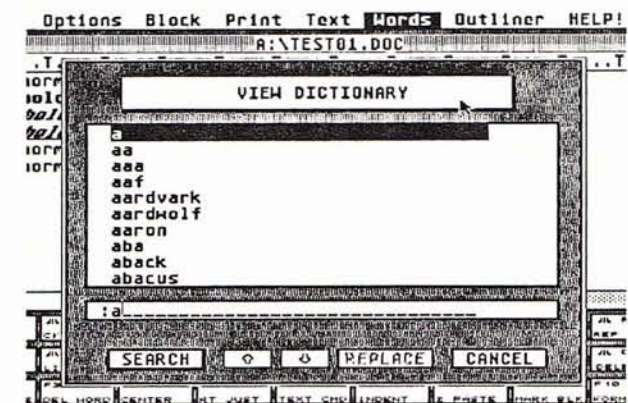


Fig 4: Partial WW Screen with Dictionary toggled

For those familiar with the "freebie", 1st Word, the appearance of these screens should come as no surprise. Indeed WW ST is similar to 1st word but with many more bells and whistles.

The similarities are: full GEM implementation, true What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) and use of the function keys. The major enhancements are as follows:

- moveable left hand margin,
- a stripped down but eminently useable outliner,

- a massive dictionary (purportedly 90000 words),
- comprehensive help screens,
- rational and intuitive search & replace, page, header and footer layout controls,
- availability of 2 more rows of "mouse clickable" commands,
- definition of many two keystroke commands for those of us who are accomplished or frequent enough typists to make use of them,
- provision of a host of printer drivers,
- unprotected - a boon to the hard disk owner or the individual who likes to get full use of his double-sided disks, and
- complete interchangeability of files with 2 other TimeWorks programs - Data Manager ST (data base) and SwiftCalc (spreadsheet).

The only feature that WW ST does not have when compared to 1st Word is the handy choice of custom characters.

DEFICIENCIES-WISH LISTS

After 3 months of intensive use we have identified the following bugs:

- similar to 1st Word, but less extensive, is the difficulty with reformatting underlined text. This problem almost suggests a bug in the Atari operating system, and
- reformatting of double spaced text is also trouble prone at times.

For a piece of software as complex and otherwise excellent, the above minor bugs are not considered to be particularly noteworthy.

This is the part of every review where one can let his imagination run free and list all the features that would be nice to have. My "wish list" is as follows:

- although the dictionary is extensive and extremely fast in the "live" spelling checker mode, it should provide for the addition of a user vocabulary (at

- least 2000 words for technocrats such as I)
- provision of columning as in Publishing Partner, ST Writer or Text Pro
- availability of different fonts and font sizes - we all would like to have the Macintosh as well as an ST n'est-ce-pas.
- provision for special characters as in 1st Word
- provision of a fail safe delete buffer - this is one of my wife's wishes from her time spent using Atari Writer on the 8 bit computers
- capability to reformat (eg from block left to centre) WW ST will only do this on the last line of the highlighted block,
- capability to merge graphics or indeed to perform graphics within the program itself. This would place WW ST in the third generation of micro word processing. Boffin (from the UK) and 1st Word Plus (also from the UK) purportedly both have one or the other of these capabilities, albeit neither has all the features of WW ST.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

What is the perfect word processor? It should have the speed of ST Writer or Text Pro, the graphics capabilities of Degas Elite, Paint Pro or at least 1st Word Plus or Boffin and a host of other features found in professional word processing or desk-top publishing packages. Some of the above features are incompatible (speed vs complexity): others, such as graphics capability, are not very important to most users. Indeed it is generally impossible to do all things well with a single piece of relatively inexpensive software.

Enough beating around the bush, what's the bottom line? Until the definitive piece of third generation software comes along, and I'm not holding my breath, **WORD WRITER ST** at less than \$100 is, in our opinion, the definitive standard in word processing for the ATARI ST. Reviews of the companion TimeWorks productions, Data Manager ST and SwiftCalc will be appearing soon in BYTOWN BYTES. Look out for them !!

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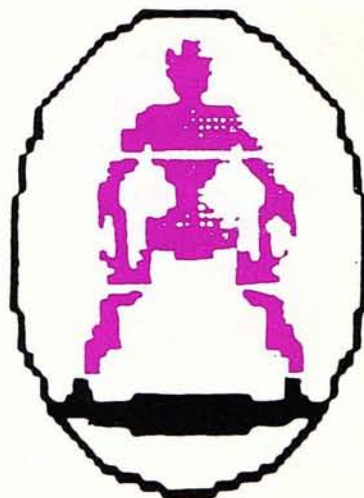
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